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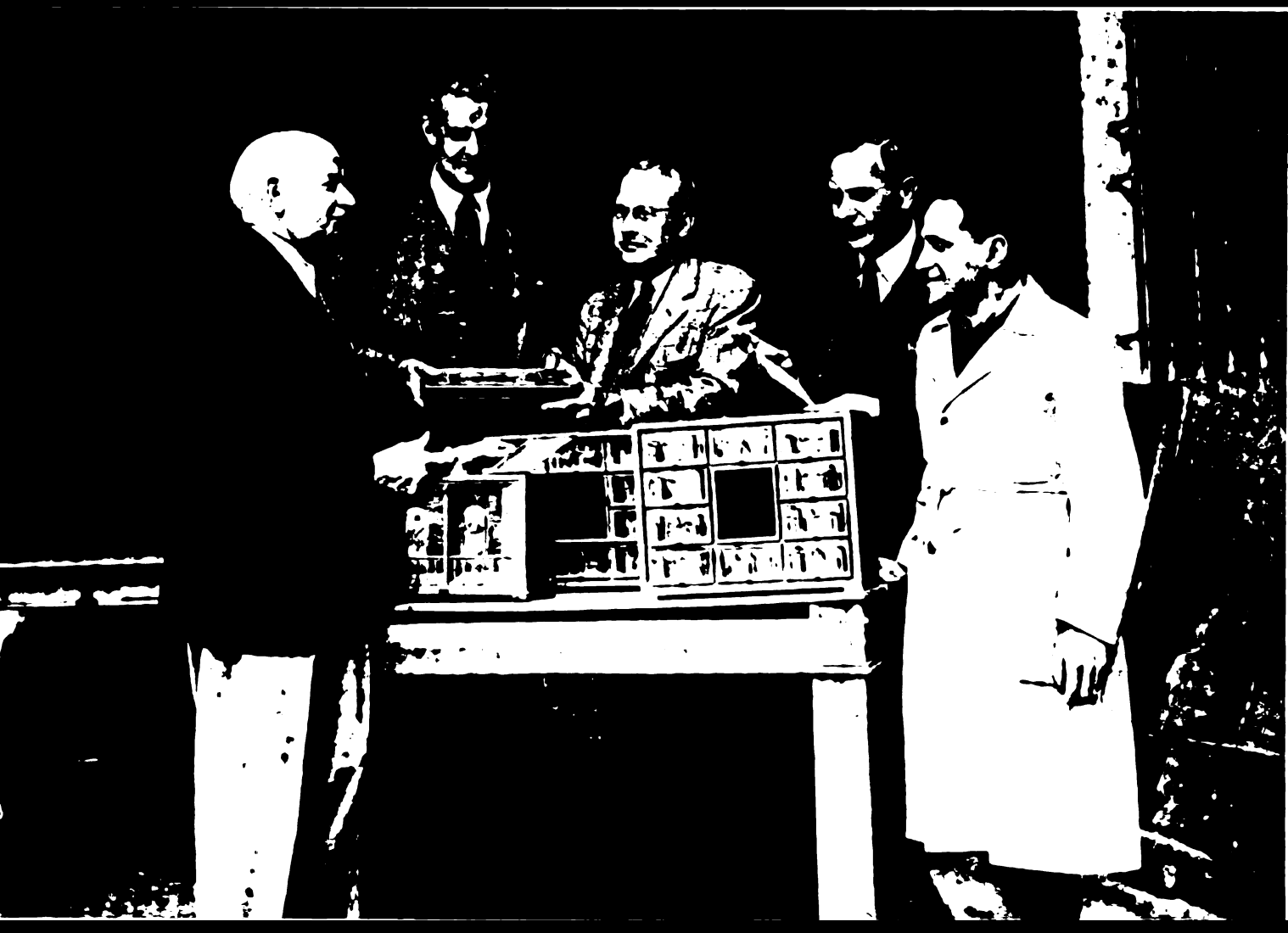
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Italy at work

Meyric Reynold Rogers

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ITALY AT WORK

HER RENAISSANCE IN DESIGN TODAY

Handbook by MEYRIC R. ROGERS
Curator of Decorative Arts and of Industrial Arts, The Art Institute of Chicago

With a Foreword by WALTER DORWIN TEAGUE

Published in Italy for
The Compagnia Nazionale Artigiana

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SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On behalf of the Committee of Organization and the American Institutional Sponsors, special thanks and acknowledgments are made herewith to all who contributed to the development of the exhibition. These services were so numerous and varied it is impossible to record them individually.

A special tribute is owing to the officers of the ECA Mission to Italy – M. Leon Dayton, Chief, Paul Hyde Bonner, James Minotto and Frank Gervasi, and also to the Honorable Ivan Lombardo and the Board of Directors of the CNA without whose understanding and enthusiasm the exhibition could not have been undertaken.

In acknowledging the services of those whose names appear on the various committees, special mention must be made of the valuable contributions of Walter Dorwin Teague, the eminent industrial designer.

The Committee of Organization is greatly indebted to the authorities of the Uffizi and in particular to Professor Filippo Rossi, for their cooperation in furnishing space for the collection and preparation of the exhibits in the basement of the Gallery.

For his constant technical assistance the project owes much to Professor Enrico Bettarini of the CNA. To Alberto Antico and Richard Miller and their corps of assistants headed by Iolanda De Sandre great credit must be given for the energy and devotion with which they solved the innumerable problems and difficulties of collecting and preparing the exhibition for its American tour.

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Enrico Bernardi (extreme right) showing his cabinets to the members of the selection committee (left to right: Walter Dorwin Teague, Charles Nagel, Meyric R. Rogers, and Ramy Alexander).

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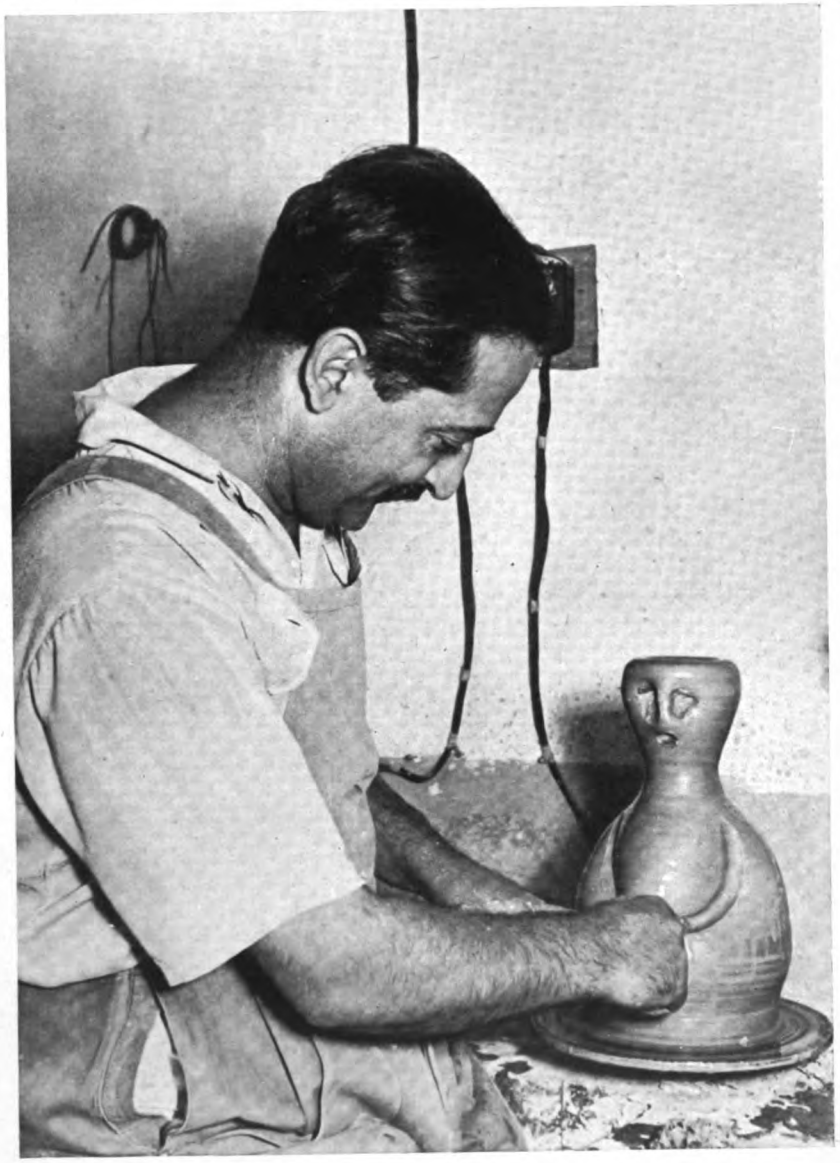












Five stages in the shaping of a jug; Guido Gambone at the potter's wheel.

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FOREWORD

In the text that follows, Meyric Rogers has described the renaissance of Italian design today with acute and sympathetic understanding. Two prolonged periods of field study in Italy, superimposed on his background of intimate knowledge of the crafts involved, give him a unique qualification for this task. There is little that I could, or would care to, add to his analysis of the relationship that the contemporary products shown in "Italy at Work" bear to the historic arts out of which they have sprung, and I fully share his enthusiasm for this new and vital flowering of ancient Italian traditions. Meyric Rogers' survey, brief as it is, is so sound and comprehensive that it calls for nothing more than concurrence from me.

But I was one of the fortunate group which travelled up and down Italy, in the spring of 1950, seeking out the Italian craftsmen in the odd places where they live and work, and selecting the objects that make up this collection. Here they are grouped together in neutral settings, displayed with the respect they deserve, to be judged quite properly on their aesthetic values alone. But I wish everyone who sees them could have shared in the excitement of the search for them — could see also the places where they were made, and meet the men and women who made them: then they would be understood as first products of a wholly fresh, immensely vigorous stirring of the deep cultural soil in which the Italian arts are rooted.

Here, for instance, you see the remarkable intarsia of Enrico Bernardi, with its tiny compositions that de Chirico or Jean Hugo can scarcely surpass; but I'd like you to see the cavernous, dark furniture repair shop, opening on a dingy rear courtyard in an old section of Bologna, where Bernardi was making these boxes in the intervals of

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mending chairs — making them in response to no demand but an inner urge that wouldn't be satisfied otherwise. We carried his two or three finished pieces out into the courtyard, under an arch and beside an old sculptured wellhead, where bomb-blasted walls let in enough daylight for us to see his exquisite workmanship properly. There it had an intensity of significance that, fine as it is, it can never have elsewhere.

Then I wish you could have trudged with us, in a pouring rain, at the end of a tiresome day, through the darkening street of the "Borgo Medioevale," a picturesque reproduction of a medieval town solidly built for an exposition in the outskirts of Turin. Not knowing exactly why you had come, you would have complained as we did of the rain, the cold and the nightfall. Then you would have turned with us into a brightly lit, white washed pair of dungeons where Victor Cerrato had found cheap quarters to exercise his extraordinary gifts. A slight, dark, sensitive young man, not far, it seemed, from discouragement, he showed these visitors from another world his beautiful figures and frames and jugs and painted plates; I hope Cerrato shared in the lift of spirits we felt.

You should have stood with us at Alfredo Barbini's fine, new, one-man furnace, on the island of Murano, while he showed us how a blob of hot glass could become a lovely naked Eve, in the hands of the master glass blower he is. His tools were the crude traditional tools of his craft — a heavy blow pipe, a pair of clumsy shears, a pair of clippers, some slivers of wood; two or three assistants moved up and back, like acolytes who knew their parts in a ritual without a word spoken; and slowly, without our being able to see exactly how, the graceful little figure took shape. Barbini's art, modern as its forms are, has descended to him from his forefathers of Murano who, seven or eight hundred years ago, fought off invading Venetians with balls of hot glass on the ends of their blowpipes.

There was the brickyard outside Rome, where Pietro Cascella had taken his outsize pieces to be fired, and we found them gathering dust

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on the floor and on the rough shelves of an open shed; and the small vaulted room, lighted by a single iron-grated window, where we first encountered those powerfully dynamic works in which Fontana uses clay and glazes with the freedom of an impressionist painter; and the tiny, six-foot-square shop in Rome where our committee had to enter in relays — it wouldn't hold us all at once — to see the fanciful costume jewelry that Luciana makes of wire and cork and shells and what not; and a hundred other settings where we found work important or merely delightful, but invariably alive with a vibrant zest for creation.

Here you see those works in dignified detachment, and because of their quality it is easy to think of them as the fruits of a mature and well-established movement. But they are not that: they are the vigorous flowering of an early spring, an upsurge of the Italian vitality that seems to have stored itself up during the long, grey Fascist interim, waiting for this day of sun again. They have the fresh charm of young experiment; their makers are seeking scope, reaching into wider fields of achievement, and if they receive the support and encouragement they deserve they will open up to the world the reserves of creative energy they still possess.

If this exhibit sends any appreciable number of Americans to seek out the craftsmen of Italy in their home places, it will have justified itself. There are still untapped sources there, a steadily ripening mastery, a variety of production which may please more than the selections we have made; and in human encounters and picturesque experiences I assure you the search will be richly rewarding.

WALTER DORWIN TEAGUE

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The unusual character of this exhibition has made the normal catalogue undesirable as well as impractical. Its place is therefore taken by this handbook which has a two fold purpose: first to clarify, as far as can be done, the background of the exhibition and the significance of the movement it represents; and second, to give an explanatory resumé of the exhibits themselves grouped roughly according to material. The number and variety of the individual objects included is so great that the customary unit listing would be of little service to the visitor, particularly since the single object has relatively little importance by itself.

For this and many other reasons this exhibition seemed to demand a more complete exposition of its background than usual. Unfortunately in spite of the importance of the movement and the quality of its products, pratically nothing of a comprehensive nature has as yet been published about them. The author has therefore heen compelled to undertake an analysis of the contents of the exhibition and their background based largely on his own observations and reflections. Fortunately these have been shaped and colored in the course of many discussions and conversations with those who are either active participants in the movement or devoting all their energies and experience to its development. To their understanding and devotion the writer is infinitely indebted.

Also to his colleagues on the Committee of Selection the writer wishes to express his gratitude not only for their expert cooperation in this mutual task but also for the benefit of their critical comments on the material under review.

M. R. R.

Ravello, June 1950.

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INTRODUCTION

Italy after the War

The Italian is an individualist. Hence this exhibition.

No visitor to Italy within the last two or three years can have failed to be impressed by two things, first by the extent of the war's destruction and second by the extraordinary rapidity with which it is being repaired. Only slightly less obvious is the accompanying surge of creative activity in other fields.

The impetus to this activity comes only in part from the physical necessity of repairing the ruin left by mine, bomb, and shell. For years the individualistic energies of the people had been repressed and canalized by totalitarian controls basically foreign to their temper. Only the explosive forces generated by the release from these controls will account for the energy with which the individual undertook the task of rebuilding his home and his workshop out of the fragments that remained. The paucity of means to hand would have paralyzed a more complex and less vital people. There was no despairing wait for outside aid. It was the individual and the family unit that went to work before even a provisional government could institute and direct relief measures. Such action was possible only to a people radically untouched by governmental paternalism and instinctively distrustful of it. The crisis brought into high relief that will to survival and constructive instinct that the Italian people have won through the long vicissitudes of their history.

Italian individualism cannot however supply of itself the resources necessary to the total recreation of their economy. The world of today is too dependent on those things that mechanization and a high degree of organization alone can supply. For this capital resources are needed beyond the power of individual or localized action. Italy's individualism is therefore her weakness as well as her strength.

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Powerful in meeting the immediate emergencies of a cataclysm, its less constructive aspects become evident economically and politically as reconstruction passes into its secondary phase.

No recent visitor to Italy can overlook the immediate effectiveness of the aid given by the Marshall Plan in this present secondary stage. Ways must now be found to make this temporary aid permanently effective in creating an autonomous economy. To this end Italian individualism must be used positively and creatively.

The inherent artistry, ingenuity, and craft skill of the Italian people can be made powerful tools in this effort. For centuries Italy, though later overshadowed by those she inspired, has been the principal center of artistic creation in our western world. Even today the forces of the industrial revolution and its consequences have been here less effective than elsewhere in the destruction of individual skills of eye and hand.

In this age of industrialization it is becoming increasingly clear that the health of our civilization depends upon a just balance between mechanized and individual creation. An economy that permits a full development of this last cannot therefore be considered backward. On the contrary, it provides an element essential to our social well being and individual sanity.

The mass of our material needs can be supplied by mechanized industry. Beyond this there remains and will continue to remain for the indefinite future a portion of our needs, material as well as spiritual, which can be supplied only by the enjoyment and practice of individual skills. Here Italy has a tremendous constructive potential.

This potential has in fact never been disregarded. It was utilized by the Fascists but warped out of shape by the restrictive interference of their political creed. The seeds sown but remaining latent under this regime came however into spontaneous life when its restrictions were removed. The urge to rebuild and recreate already mentioned found almost immediate expression in the craft arts. This movement was not content merely with the continuation or elaboration of traditional forms, but instinctively sought freedom from them. In this the spirit of the traditional craft arts in Italy has

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not only found a new and contemporary expression but many of the traditional forms themselves are being subtly revitalized.

This contemporary renaissance is a popular movement in the best sense. Its leaders are found not merely among its leading architects, artists, and designers, particularly fitted for the task by their training, but also among the craftsmen themselves. As will be indicated later, many of the outstanding products of design and skill included in the exhibition are due directly to the creative genius of certain inspired artist craftsmen who are today the spiritual heirs of the great artificers of Italy's past. It is also particularly significant that in those fields where the knowledge of fashion and high style is important, in personal and costume accessories, for instance, the leadership is frequently taken by members of the older aristocracy. Under the impulse of economic and social need they have turned their cultural background to effective use in the creation and artistic management of numerous small producing units where they develop the latent skills of the less fortunate.

As might be expected under present conditions, this renaissance in design is finding its expression in materials that are either basically less costly or readily obtainable from local natural resources. This explains the scarcity of works in silver and other precious metals in contrast to those in brass and copper. It also explains the variety, fantasy and ingenuity with which such basic materials as go to the making of strawwork, textiles in cotton, hemp, and linen, ceramics and glass are fashioned. The most complete development will in general be found in those objects in which skill, imagination, and a sense of the material itself are the most important ingredients.

This would seem the appropriate place to mention a non–profit organization known as Handicraft Development Incorporated in America, and CADMA in Italy, which was established in 1945 under the leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Max Ascoli of New York to provide the moral and material assistance so desperately needed by the war ravaged Italian artisan. The efforts of this organisation were concentrated on providing the individual craftsman with needed materials and on giving him guidance in meeting the requirements of the American market. Two years later Handicraft Development Incorporated

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opened the House of Italian Handicrafts in New York as an American outlet to take care of the resulting production and to establish a liaison between the Italian craftsman and his potential American client.

This material and psychological aid was so stimulating that in 1948 the Export–Import Bank made credit of almost $5,000,000 available to the Italian craft industry to encourage further development along the lines established by Dr. and Mrs. Ascoli and their friends. To implement this expansion CADMA was merged in the larger CNA (Compagnia Nazionale Artigiana) which also took over the House of Italian Handicrafts, as its American subsidiary. The importance of such assistance can hardly be over–emphasized.

Organization and Aims of the Exhibition

Early in 1949 the Art Institute of Chicago, as a result of contacts with the House of Italian Handicrafts, Inc., authorized a field survey of Italian crafts and industrial arts to see whether conditions were favorable for an exhibition of her post–war production to be held in the United States. To this end the Institute's representative, accompanied by Ramy Alexander, vice–president of the CNA, visited the principal centers of production that summer, and presented a report. This indicated that so much material of high quality and interest to the American public was available that effort should be made to develop the project.

Thanks to the interest of the Italian Government, the officials of the ECA Mission to Italy and of the Export–Import Bank and the active cooperation of the CNA, arrangements were made to meet the greater part of the financial obstacles. Feeling that the proposed exhibition should be nationwide in its scope, the Art Institute invited eleven other art museums in the United States to cooperate in the program. Arrangements were made whereby the material to be selected would be made available for the three year period necessary. It was also agreed that the selection of the material was to be in the

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hands of an American Committee who would be best able to gauge what would be of most interest and value to the American public.

This Committee, working with the facilities of the CNA, met in Italy from April fourth to June fourth 1950, making its selections in a tour of over three thousand miles. The principal centers of production were visited and the factories, workrooms, and studios of some two hundred and fifty producers and designers thoroughly combed for material. Certain larger temporary exhibitions of handicraft and industrial arts such as those in Milan, Florence, and Naples were also drawn upon as well as special showings of liturgical arts in Venice and Milan. In addition, the stocks of a large number of specialty shops in all the principal centers were thoroughly inspected in the course of the tour. The list of producers, representatives and designers in the appendix will indicate the coverage given in the choice of approximately two thousand five hundred objects comprising the exhibition.

The principles governing the selection are simply stated though rather less simple in application. Any object could be chosen regardless of use or material provided it was not purely traditional in design and satisfied a high standard of quality in form and color in relation to its material and purpose. Special attention was given to objects which showed an apparently fresh approach to the problem or evidenced a sensitive and intelligent adaptation of traditional forms to contemporary use. Naturally much credit was given to sincerity of craftsmanship and imaginative use of the materials.

Reflecting Italian conditions, the great majority of the exhibits belong to the class of true handicrafts. This means that the finished object is the product of one or two workers who may or may not have furnished the design also. A smaller section which includes a quantity of textiles, ceramics and glass is the result of a mixed procedure — partially individual handicraft and partially quantity production methods. The last and smallest section consisting mainly of mechanical apparatus represents the use of purely industrial methods in the carrying out of designs of a high order.

It was felt that the exhibition of single objects alone would not convey adequately the whole spirit of Italian design. Therefore certain

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leading designers and architects were invited to submit schemes for complete units. From the submissions five selections were made for actual excution to provide as it were the core of the exhibition. These will be discussed later in the handbook.

With a few exceptions the exhibition contains only objects designed and made since 1945.

In the organization of the exhibition and the selection of its contents certain definite aims were kept in view. Primarily of course it is designed to give the American public the pleasure that comes from seeing objects made in our own time that are at once useful and beautiful or stimulating to the imagination. This means the broadening of our cultural experience — the main purpose of all our institutions and museums of art. Since pleasure in such things is always heightened by the possibility of possession, the stimulation of this exhibition should be all the greater in that practically all the exhibits or their equivalents are not only within the reach of the average buying public but will be so available. Secondarily, but of great importance, is the fact that if the movement represented by the exhibition is to develop to the greater health of Italy and our western world the producer–consumer chain must be completed. To this end the American public must be adequately informed of the opportunities afforded by this movement for the enrichment of their lives in a field which supplements rather than competes with their own production.

Out of a war torn country is emerging again that stream of creative imagination — warm and rich in human values — which has inspired our civilization from its beginnings. It must not be allowed to dry up through lack of understanding.

In its work the Committee of Selection fully realized that even with the greatest of pains and the best of intentions a complete presentation was an impossible ideal. Undoubtedly much material has been inadvertently omitted which should have been included and possibly many things included which might better have been left out. However, despite the human limitations inherent in any such effort, the exhibition does, it is believed, offer a true cross section of Italy's remarkable present day contribution in a field so traditionally her own.

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THE ARTS AND CRAFTS IN ITALY TODAY

Regional Distribution

As already noted in the introduction the range of post war Italian production in the arts and crafts of design is limited. Not all possible fields are included. Due to present material and financial restrictions, little if any significant work is being done in certain branches of the handicrafts in which Italy has traditionally excelled. In certain fields and regions much work is still being done in a purely repetitive and diluted traditional manner. This occurs even in fields where a livelier and more creative activity is evident. In others the impulse to creative enterprise has been thwarted by the deadening hand of the commercial buyer who is constitutionally afraid of innovations when a steady market exists for long accustomed and stereotyped designs. In this case a lack of initiative on the part of the Italian producer with limited capital is hardly surprising.

The extent and intensity of the new movement in the craft arts varies greatly over the country. As might be expected, this activity is limited for the most part to Piedmont, Lombardy, the Veneto and Liguria in the north, to Tuscany, Emilia and the Romagna in the center, and to the region of Naples in the south. The traditional peasant crafts of southern Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia continue much as before. In these regions — modern Italy's principal economic and social problem — the omnipresent blight of poverty and lack of industrial resources encouraging enterprise have as yet been too powerful to permit a constructive reaction to the destructive forces of war.

With the exception of ceramics and possibly of textiles, the centers of production in any one field tend to a concentration in one or two regions. Thus glassware comes mainly from Venice and secondarily from Empoli and its vicinity in Tuscany. Non-traditional wood

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furniture is found mainly in Turin, Milan, and Florence. Strawwork centers mainly in Florence and Naples and metalwork in the cities of the Po Valley and Tuscany. While most of the major crafts find progressive and leading practitioners in such centers as Milan and Florence, no ready review of contemporary production in the whole field can be made in any one Italian center as is possible to the visitor to New York or to most of the principal European capitals. This scattering is less evident in the relatively recent field of mechanical production — industrial design in the limited sense — which finds its natural center in the industrial cities of Lombardy and Piedmont.

Designer and Craftsman

In addition to the forces already mentioned — the basic urges of this post-war renaissance — certain formative or directive factors are also of considerable importance.

One of the most significant of these is the fact that the Italians have never lost sight of the unity of the arts of design. There are perhaps individual exceptions or at least variations in the intensity with which this traditional concept is maintained. But in the main, the arts of architecture, painting, sculpture, and of design in all its many material and utilitarian manifestations have neither been canalized into mutually exclusive specialties nor been separated in such a way as to make an exclusive professional aristocracy out of the practitioners of the first three and a commonality out of the remainder. The romantic snobism which draws a qualitative distinction between the fine and the applied arts has little prevalence in Italy. Here the earlier pre-academic tradition still exists that sees nothing eccentric in an artist working in any or all of these forms of expression as occasion arises.

This explains the very considerable part played by architects, painters, and sculptors in the creation of the contents of this exhibition. The strong community of interest and understanding among workers in all the visual arts is here immediately apparent. We not

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only find architects of the highest standing giving their energies with equal intensity to the designing of furniture, metalwork and ceramics; painters paying serious attention to the decoration of ceramics and the designing of textiles; but ceramists, glass blowers, wood workers and producers of objects of all sorts working with the creative fantasy and sensitive understanding usually attributed only to the artist *per se*.

It would of course be nonsense to claim that even the majority of the contemporary Italian craftsmen and designers is imbued and vitalized alike with this essence of creative artistry. But the exhibits themselves will show to what an extraordinary extent they are fashioned with a just and subtle sense of color, an understanding of plastic values and an imaginative grasp which are basic to all high artistic achievement.

Another factor probably closely connected with his individualism is the instinctive craving of the Italian craftsman for variety. It is difficult — almost impossible — to obtain the precise duplication of any one hand-wrought object or design. This is often mistaken for a careless disregard of precision. This is not the principle reason. It comes rather from an inherent feeling for the individual existence of things. It also reflects a sense, probably without conscious realization, of the necessary individuality of every human act.

Unless externally controlled by the necessities of commercial demand to as near an approximation of repetitive accuracy as possible, the Italian worker will treat a set of plates not as a number of repetitive units but as a group of individuals all having a strong family resemblance.

In our times the maintenance and encouragement of such a feeling is of inestimable importance since it is a necessary counterbalance to the lifeless monotony of purely mechanical production.

A third factor related to this individualistic approach is that sympathy with his material which is almost universally characteristic of the work of the Italian craftsman. Left to himself, the craftsman may indeed create or follow a bad design, but he seldom violates the

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character of the material used unless forced by necessity to cater to vulgarized taste.

This sensibility is in part the product of the hand craft process whenever employed. Here it has its roots in the soil. Through the ages the Italian has kept an intimacy with the earth and its products that is almost animistic in its quality. Out of his pagan past he seems instinctively to endow objects and materials with a personality and soul not unlike his own. There is an unselfconscious personification of his material which leads him to work with it, at times even talk to it as with another individual not unlike himself. This is not to be confused with a conscious whimsey or quaintness that easily becomes banality. It is the natural outcome of a certain sense of mystic forces ever at work behind and within the obvious face of nature. This mysticism, in counterpoint to the Italian sensuous appreciation of nature, is one of the main sources of her artistic strength in its most complex as well as its simplest expressions.

Influence and Tendencies

The visitor to the exhibition interested in the development of contemporary design will be able to trace the effect of all of the main influences and tendencies that are playing a part in the art of our time. More interesting than this, however, is the result of the filtering of these forces through the screen of the Italian character and temperament.

In America the recent exhibition of twentieth century Italian painting and sculpture organized by the Museum of Modern Art called attention to the contributions of Italy to the development of contemporary art, contributions which have largely been lost sight of in the concentration of interest on those of the school of Paris and its international adumbrations.

There can be no question of the preponderant effect of these last on the art of our time. Yet even here in the work of Modigliani, to mention but one well known instance, the direct influence of

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Italian tradition and approach played its part. Also it should not be forgotten that the reaction against static post-impressionism found one of its earliest voices in the futurist manifestoes of Marinetti and Boccioni of 1909 and 1910. Though the actual realization of this program was largely abortive owing to the contradictions involved, it formed an Italian counterpart to the more formal intellectualism of cubism. Beyond this it showed an emotional realization of the need to amplify the spatial concepts of the baroque. It attempted to express the dynamic interests of the times through the creation of form by continuous movement. A few years later the work of Giorgio de Chirico provided one of the main directional forces for the surrealist movement of the following decade. Here certainly Italian influence has been responsible for much of the poetic and mystic elements which bring an inner vitality and depth to this most important phase of contemporary art.

Though the work of many of the younger designers in the exhibition shows clearly the impact of Picasso and the brilliance and range of his attack on the problems of formal expression, it also shows a certain warmth, humor, and sensuous appreciation essentially Italian.

On the whole pure abstraction has little appeal to the Italian temperament. The reaction against a commonplace realism here finds its natural outlet in fantasy of form. This, while often severely controlled, parallels the exuberance of nature rather than transposing it into geometric symbols. For the same reason, color is considered less as an aid to formal expression than for its independent ability to express a mood and to delight and stimulate the eye. It may also be noted that the sense of color which is so obvious in these exhibits, while capable of great subtilty, has less of the element of taste in the Gallic sense than of the gusto that springs directly from the brilliance of the Italian sun and air and a frank acceptance of their sensuous stimulation. The fact that color is felt independently and not subordinated to the demands of form is one of the main reasons that the plastic fantasy of many of the ceramic sculptures gives an impression of almost chaotic exuberance.

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The influence of functionalist discipline is chiefly evident in the work of what may be called the Milanese school. This is as might be expected, for not only is this city the center of Italian industrialism but the center of a region which is both northern and Mediterranean in its spirit and population. The northern elements in Lombardy are conducive alike to industrial development and an objective and rational spirit in design. Even here in spite of the almost fanatic zeal of the adherents of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus, the purist geometry of the north is modified by a sense of the need for greater plasticity, movement, and warmth. The physical necessities of structure are therefore enriched and supplemented by curvilinear modulations and a search for appropriate varieties of color and texture.

Many of the solutions of the extremely difficult problems set by the interplay of the various factors mentioned above may be subject to criticism. They are on the other hand among the most important contributions yet made towards the ultimate solution of the basic problems of contemporary design. The results, while often lacking a sense of finality, display a creative ingenuity and fertility of imagination which are difficult to find elsewhere.

The exhibition offers ample evidence that both the intellectual and emotional, the rational and extra-rational currents in contemporary art are strongly reflected in Italian design today. Overall the extra-rational elements, the response to emotional rather than intellectual stimuli is dominant. This is intimately connected with that underlying extra-sensory mysticism which penetrates the traditional Italian approach to the arts. This dominance rests, therefore, on no merely transitory trend or reaction to northern rationalism. It is simply a demonstration of the vitality of the Italian tradition and its capacity to interpret the present as vividly as it has the past.

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NOTES ON THE EXHIBITION

The following review of the contents of the exhibition is devised to call attention to the salient characteristics of each section through the work of representative designers and craftsmen. No attempt is made at an inventory. The demands of brevity and clarity prevent more than the most summary mention of the work of those representatives whose place, in many instances, could readily be taken by others. Some discrepancies between the material mentioned and that actually shown may occur since this text had to be completed before a final check could be made of the material actually received.

Furniture

In selecting items from this large and vaguely defined class, the committee felt it necessary to bypass most of the current commercial production which is largely centered in the region of Milan. As is unfortunately the case also in America and elsewhere, this has little to offer that is stimulating either in idea or design. Most of it is based on an unsympathetic reworking or repetition of traditional forms and fashioned to meet particular Italian needs. It is, therefore, of little interest to an American public.

Special order production is far more general in Italy than in the United States. It is in fact still the normal procedure. Except for the various grades of "borax"* mentioned above, Italian furniture is made in relatively small cabinet shops with a minimum of mechanical equipment. It is, therefore, comparatively simple and relatively

* Borax is the trade name for the cheaper grades of quantity produced furniture in the American market.

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inexpensive for the individual to have special designs carried out to his own specifications.

Production for the market — which hardly exists in the American sense — is therefore limited to smaller occasional pieces. These are generally tables, chairs, stands, and racks of various sorts designed either by an architect, the producer himself, or by an independent designer who frequently retails the product in his own specialty shop. The resulting "line" is on that account anything but standard and subject to frequent changes.

The individuality of Italian production and the consequent difficulties of assembling an adequate representation are therefore obvious. The need for including specially designed interiors to secure such a representation is also apparent.

With few exceptions the furniture in the exhibition exemplifies first the individual creations of the architect–designer and, second, those of the producer–decorator intended for a more general but still a limited distribution.

The extremely interesting experimental designs of the table and chairs by Carlo Mollino of Turin reproduced from originals made for a private apartment in that city, well exemplify the first of these groups. They represent a peculiarly Italian type of functionalism in which contemporary engineering devices are used with a sense of line and form which in spite of its daring has still an echo of tradition.

Belonging more to the second group are the pieces produced by *Azucena*, a group of architect designers of Milan, those by *Fontana Arte* also of Milan, and of the architect–designer Cesare Lacca, who is probably best known for his design and production of brass work. The delightful racks and table stands by Pietro Maffeis of Cantù (Como) are also representative of this class. In all of the above, metal and glass are used either alone or in conjunction with wood. They illustrate not only the contemporary trend but a definitely Italian sense of the aesthetic quality of the particular materials.

The tables, seating equipment, and occasional pieces made by Pecorini of Florence show a thorough understanding of the decorative possibilities of wood framing combined with natural and plastic

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fibers. Their basically direct and functional approach is unstrained, a certain linear flow being given by the shaping of individual members. Such treatment of the material may also he noted in the chairs from Chiavari.

The furniture designed particularly for the loggias and terraces which play such an important part in Italian living is represented by two types. First we may mention the more sophisticated glass and enameled iron pieces such as those from *Casa e Giardino* of Milan. A second more informal type is exemplified in the bent wood, bamboo, and raffia chairs and lounges which have been given a contemporary character by Massimo Carola of Naples.

While the Italian kitchen is not so specialized in its equipment as the American, we still have something to learn from the practical ingenuity of the marbletop work table shown by Giuseppe Capri of Florence at this year's Florentine Fair.

In addition to what has already been mentioned, much interesting experimental work is being done by those architect designers who are particularly devoted to the functionalist theory. Here the influence of advanced American design is very apparent. This approach is evident in the combination living and dining room by Carlo Mollino. In contrast with this is the free decorative style of the group led by the architect Gio Ponti whose fertile imagination and decorative ingenuity produced the unique design for the dining room, also one of the special units developed for the exhibition.

This is probably the logical place to mention the rather large group of lighting apparatus which was selected by the committee principally from the showrooms of *Arte Luce* and *Fontana Arte* in Milan and of Seguso in Murano (Venice). The success of the Italian designer in meeting one of the most vexing problems of contemporary interior design is clearly shown here. On the whole the units have a high degree of flexibility even when not mobile. Though for the most part — particularly in the case of *Arte Luce* — they are designed for their functional effectiveness with considerable severity, they are pleasing decoratively through an excellent use of materials and carefully studied proportions. The chandeliers and sconces from

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Seguso and *Fontana Arte* are straightforward and handsome designs where decorative effectiveness has been achieved without sacrifice of basic simplicity.

Mention should also be made here of some larger decorative accessories which may be considered under the furniture heading. The handsome mirror by *Fontana Arte* indicates the possibilities of finding a satisfactory contemporary successor to the traditional Venetian design. Unfortunately there does not yet appear to be any contemporary heir to the ancient Italian craft of lacquer decoration but the way has already been shown to a contemporary treatment of wood inlay or *intarsia* which was brought to such heights by the Italian masters of the Renaissance.

The cabinets and boxes designed and made by Enrico Bernardi of Bologna are masterpieces of intarsia decoration thoroughly contemporary in feeling yet based on a complete understanding of the traditional craft. While it is unlikely that work of such creative sensitivity can ever become general, it is to be hoped that the standards set by this modern master will in time have their effect in raising the quality of the work in such traditional centers as that of Sorrento.

Ceramics

The production of faience or majolica, a porous earthenware finished with a whitish, opaque glaze and decorated with one or more colors is not only possibly the most typical of the Italian crafts but also the least localized. The secret of this technique with its great decorative potential was probably introduced into central Italy from the Orient late in the middle ages. Brought to perfection during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in such centers as Faenza (hence faience), Urbino, Gubbio, and Deruta, faience became an important article of export as well as of domestic use. Its production was undertaken in almost every region if only for local consumption for the materials needed were readily obtainable from the soil and the equipment necessary relatively simple. In the course of time each

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region developed its distinctive local decorative patterns. For the most part these were applied with considerable bravura even in the cheapest and most popular wares and with a sense of the qualities of the material given by long and continuous tradition.

Though severely interfered with in its upper levels by nineteenth century industrialism and outside competition, this traditional production has continued with vicissitudes to the present. With the general revival of interest in folk arts early in this century, the current traditional faience of Italy found a wide market. While this satisfied the antiquarian tastes of the day and kept alive the craft skills of a large body of workers, it resulted in a general stereotyping of design from which any vigorous new movement had to escape.

That this escape or release from the weight of superficial traditionalism is now almost an accomplished fact is demonstrated by the ceramics in this exhibition. On the other hand, it is well to note that in spite of the often extreme reaction against traditionalism shown both in form and decoration, the quality and verve of the new designs rests to a very considerable extent on an understanding of material and technique given only by the experience of centuries.

The dominant position of the faience technique in Italian ceramics has never been seriously challenged. So strong is this native tradition that even today the high-fire wares and those influences by the glaze techniques of the Far East which today dominate the work of the artist potter in other countries, play a very minor role here.

Though true porcelain was made in Italy in various centers from early in the eighteenth century, the primarily industrial nature of the processes involved in its modern production has limited its manufacture today, in Italy, largely to that of the firms of Richard-Ginori and Laveno. The Ginori factory situated in Doccia outside Florence has been in practically continuous operation for over two centuries. Though technically excellent, the Ginori production is concerned chiefly with the adaptation and reproduction of earlier designs. Their representation in this exhibition shows, however, that effort has and is being made to introduce newer designs, principally by the

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versatile Gio Ponti whose direct influence is responsible for many fresh examples in the most varied fields of artisan production.

The ceramics shown fall in general into one of three main groups. First is that of the tablewares including the majority of useful containers. Though in this class the form and decoration are usually due to the designs of an artist or master ceramist, they are for the most part carried out by artisans working under direction and, therefore, represent a semi-industrialized process. Closely allied to this is the production of decorative tiling. Third, is the large group of more purely decorative wares created primarily as objects of art. This group, principally individual works by the artist craftsman who is frequently a sculptor as well as a ceramist, borders at one extreme the class of useful containers and at the other merges with that of pure sculpture.

A dominating characteristic of these post war ceramics is their individualism. Even in the case of the ceramic houses of Albisola where the work of individual artists is produced side by side with the reproduction of traditional types, no over-all regional quality is evident. It is also difficult if not dangerous to try to single out one or more main trends in design. It can perhaps be said that there is a tendency to traditionalism in form even when the decoration has great freedom of fantasy. It can also be said that strong clear colors, often with considerable contrast in color values, are rather universally evident. Certainly, with only a few exceptions, less attention is paid to refinement in glaze and color than to boldness of fantasy and vigor of execution.

One notable exception calling for special mention particularly in reference to tablewares is the collaborative production of the Cannon-D'Agostino factory of Salerno. The traditional faience or majolica process has here been submitted to a scientific rebuilding. The result is a ware of exceptional refinement in glaze and form — approaching porcelain standards — decorated with semi-naturalistic, yet delicate, designs of flowers, fruit, vegetables, and sea life, the work of Ernestine Cannon, an American artist long resident in Italy. This combination of highly personalized design and perfected

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traditional skills is an index to possibilities in the field hitherto largely unexplored in meeting the taste and needs of foreign markets.

Beyond the above generalizations which apply equally to both tablewares and decorative pieces, little can be said that applies to the work of more than one individual. It can, however, be emphasized that Italian ceramics being generically a low-fire faience is vigorous and colorful rather than light and delicate in character and is based primarily on an earthy, forthright and popular concept of the art.

This fundamental quality is, in the writer's opinion, brought to its highest perfection in the work of Guido Gambone formerly of Vietri and now of Florence. Using a modification of the traditional technique which brings body and glaze into such close relationship that they seem a unit, his work recalls the monumental vigor and fantasy of Etruscan figure pottery while being unmistakably contemporary in form, feeling, and decoration. The result is a semi-abstract, ceramic sculpture of the first order which is both a highly personal and a basic statement of the qualities of the material.

In the work of the ceramic sculptor Lucio Fontana of Albisola, *tours de force* of super-impressionist virtuosity based on baroque themes, we find one extreme of contemporary expression. In that of Leoncillo and Pietro Cascella, both of Rome, are two versions of the abstractionist pole. The work of the former is vigorous in color and carefully controlled and organic in form. That of Cascella shows an explosive imagination resulting in grotesque combinations that are at times startlingly effective.

The peculiar abstract qualities resulting from the construction of forms out of sheets of clay rather than by molding or mass modeling gives a unique character to the bowls, mirror frames, and figurines devised by the sculptor Melotti of Milan. The potting is here extraordinarily fine since the body is reduced to the minimum thickness necessary to support the heavy enamel glazes.

The work of the above artists is singled out for special mention only as representing extremes of individual accomplishment or experimentation. The briefest summary of the ceramics in this exhibition cannot omit mentioning the names of Agenore Fabbri and Aligi

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Sassú of Milan, Cerrato of Turin, and Fantoni and Zaccagnini of Florence. To this distinguished list many other names should undoubtedly be added.

The extensive development of Italian ceramics both past and present is in some measure the natural outcome of the wide spread use of clay products practicable in a climate where hard frosts are relatively infrequent. This also tends to emphasize the decorative rather than the protective function of glazes which in turn favors the use of the faience technique. Another factor that has played a part in this development is the relative costliness of wood for structural use and surface protection in a country largely dependent on the available supply for fuel. This situation is of course typical of all Mediterranean countries.

While these considerations have been basic to the evolution of Italian ceramics in general, they have been particularly important in the development of tiling for both decorative and protective use indoors and out. The exhibition contains a number of examples of the contemporary response to these historic forces. Particularly noteworthy are the floor of the terrace by Guido Gambone and the sectional samples of floor tiling produced by Cannon–D'Agostino of Salerno. The mantel tiles by Annamaria Cesarini Cascella and the ceramic painting of Aligi Sassú exemplify other possibilities in the medium.

Glass

Venice, or rather the adjacent island of Murano, comes immediately to mind at any mention of Italian glassmaking. The technique of the craft which had apparently been lost in the west after the barbarian invasions seems to have been brought to Venice on the same westward current that brought faience to the shores of Italy. It was from Venice that, in spite of vigorous efforts to the contrary, the art of glassmaking passed to other European countries. In Italy itself the continued concentration of the craft in Venice stems principally from the ability of the Republic to discourage by assassination and political pressure the development of competition through the efforts

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of Venetian craftsman who might escape across her boundaries. Even after these controls were broken and almost overwhelming competition developed elsewhere, Murano remained without a serious rival in its particular field. The experience and skills accumulated over the better part of a millenium have equipped her craftsmen with an almost magical adeptness in the blowing and shaping of her characteristic metal. This is as extraordinary today as it was in the period of her monopoly.

The bulk of the glass wares produced in the houses and furnaces of Murano still adheres to her traditional techniques. It embodies an approach to type and design established before the comparatively recent vogue for the massive limpidity of clear, lead crystal. This Venetian type is based on the qualities of a refined soda silica metal or body. This has a softness of effect peculiarly suited to serve as a base for the application of color. The latter usually appears either in what is called *latticino* or as applied ornament in both opaque and translucent metal. In *latticino* the colored or opaque white glass is incorporated in the body in bands or interwoven threads in stripes or swirls of varying complexity.

The effect is to produce a ware of great lightness and delicacy in both form and color. Production beyond that of the simplest table wares is, therefore, centered on the dexterity and virtuosity of the master blower each with his team of assistants. This fundamentally individualistic process contrasts sharply with the making of molded forms.

Today, in addition to this most characteristic type, the glass houses are also producing mold-blown crystal and pieces of heavy metal to meet the demand for commercial tablewares and the current taste for massive decorative pieces of a brilliant and dense body. While the exhibits selected from Murano will show the high degree of success with which these last demands are being met, a special effort has been made to indicate the ability of the leading houses to use the traditional techniques in the expression of contemporary ideas of form.

It is unfortunate that, though these revitalized products in the Venetian tradition are of superlative quality, the slight excess of their cost over that of the regular commercial wares has largely kept them

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out of the American market. It is hoped that the visitor to the exhibition will give these wares special attention for they are among the most exciting and charming products of Italian skill and imagination. In this group the glass wares of the houses of Seguso and of Venini are very rich and varied. Here special note should be taken both of the *latticino* pieces and of the fantasy and humor of the figurines most of which are still hardly known to the American public. In the *latticino* group a number of more conventional designs have been included to show their propriety for contemporary decoration. Another particularly interesting series of both light blown and individually modeled pieces comes from the recently established *piazza* of Barbini who is his own master blower and designer.

The ability of the Murano houses to meet the contemporary demand for undecorated tablewares is well shown in the series of pleasing shapes produced by Nason & Moretti. These are made either in clear metal or in tones of smoke, aquamarine, and green.

Outside of Murano little true glassware is made except in Empoli near Florence. An ancient center for the production of Chianti flasks, the Empoli houses have in recent years improved the quality of their metal and now produce tablewares and decorative containers of medium weight in a fine rich green. Though generally simple, some of the Empoli forms are quite distinguished. The examples shown in the exhibition include several sets which have been fitted with cases and handles of raffia. This makes a pleasing combination of colors and textures inspired by the traditional protective covering of the wine flask. Few art students of the older generation are likely to forget this time-honored still life property.

Some further reference should be made here to the use of glass for its texture, hardness, and translucency as one of the components in the making of various decorative and useful accessories. Aside from its necessary employment in the lighting fixtures already mentioned and its structural and decorative use in furniture, many of the boxes, photograph frames, and accessories produced by such specialty houses as *Fontana Arte* show its properties as the basic molded plastic have not escaped Italian taste and ingenuity.

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In summing up this section of the exhibition, attention should be called to one salient fact. The distinguishing characteristic of Italian glassmaking yesterday and today is its insistence on the uniquely ductile properties of the material and its development of them beyond the bare requirements of utility. Italian glass is primarily blown glass or shaped on the blower's pipe. Though the decorative possibilities of engraving, cutting, surface enamelling, and flashing were explored by the Venetians at an early date, they have been and are little used. In Italy there seems to have been an instinctive preference for methods which utilize to the full the properties peculiar to the material. This is just as true today in spite of the contradictions of contemporary fashion.

Metalwork and Enamels

The survey of contemporary Italian metalwork afforded by the exhibition allows few significant generalizations. As already noted, the absence of any quantity of work in the precious metals reflecting experimentation in new forms can be attributed to economic conditions. Current Italian silverware is noticeably repetitive and traditional probably because lack of demand for intrinsically costly objects discourages experimentation on the part of craftsmen ill equipped with capital and facing strict governmental controls in addition. In the time at its disposal, the committee of selection was able to discover only one exception in the production of Finzi of Milan which could be included in the exhibition.

Unfortunately, lack of funds made it impossible to obtain for the exhibition a representation of present Italian accomplishment in the field of jewelry using precious metals and gems. Though here the precious metals appear usually as ancillary materials, they are used with the traditional skill of the Italian goldsmith. In the composition of fine jewelry the Italian flair for color and feeling for free organic design, notably reflected in the field of costume ornament, afford a refreshing relief from the somewhat vulgar brilliance and mass of the contemporary style dominant elsewhere.

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A definite effort on the part of the artist craftsman to escape from the dull traditionalism which has so long afflicted the makers of ecclesiastical utensils is shown in the crosses, chalices, and monstrances selected principally from the material shown in the Exhibition of Liturgical Arts held in Venice in the summer of 1950. A similar effort is evident in the imaginative if somewhat over elaborate altar cross in silver, gilt, and lapis lazuli which is a somewhat earlier product of the Galassi Studios.

While the work of the Florentine goldsmith is as skillful as always, it shows in general a lack of fresh approach. However, in the compacts, vanity and cigarette cases produced by Rulli, Fornetti, and Armando Castellani after designs by Professor Enrico Bettarini, there is a simple directness of design and a practical understanding of the problems which are thoroughly contemporary.

These last qualities are most evident in the objects and accessories in brass produced after the war by several designers but principally by the architect Cesare Lacca who has also turned his energies to furniture and lighting fixtures. The variety and quality of his creations included in the exhibition place him high among the architect designers leading the current movement. The quality of his work depends again upon a keen feeling for proportion and the inherent qualities of the material which provide all the decorative effectiveness needed without strain or exaggeration.

The successful use of brass, alone and also in combination with wood and glass, is one of the notable accomplishments of the new movement. Not traditionally one of Italy's leading craft media, its present position is doubtless due to post war conditions which compelled renewed attention to materials formerly regarded as relatively commonplace. The pronounced success of this innovation is another tribute to the vitality of Italian design.

The signs of a parallel development in the treatment of copper and its softer alloys are evident to a somewhat less degree in the production of Nino Ferrari of Brescia — many of them designed by Gio Ponti — and by the work of various craftsmen of central Italy exhibited in the recent Artisan's Fair of Florence. A

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number of these were selected as exemplifying developments of forms obviously based on traditional types which show not only a response to contemporary ideas but also the essential vitality of shapes based on an unformulated response to the basic qualities of the material.

This seems a suitable place to discuss briefly the field of enamels. These are, in essence, the application of glaze techniques to the enrichment of metallic forms. The craft has a long history in Italy and for centuries has been one of the principal processes used by the jeweler. The possibilities of the material parallel those of ceramic glazes to which they are close kin.

Within recent years these possibilities have been thoroughly explored by Paoli De Poli of Padua whose work in both transparent and opaque enamels on copper uses to the full the decorative effectiveness of areas of color blended or contrasted over simple forms. A sensitive juxtaposition of the qualities of opaque and translucent films plus a daring yet just sense of color relationships are the distinctive characteristics of his work. In this case the application of formal decoration is as unnecessary as in that of the finest oriental porcelains where form and color support each other. In addition to the boxes, bowls, vases, and a variety of small containers treated as above, De Poli provides decorative plaques from which table tops, mantel enframements, etc., can be assembled. Here the lack of a skeleton of three dimensional form supporting the color is supplied by the addition of suitably stylized decorative motifs.

The art of pictorial enamels, which has rarely been successfully practiced in modern time, is represented in the exhibition by an extraordinary series of plaques on religious themes designed and executed by Luigi Martinotti, a Milanese artist craftsman. Particularly in his Stations of the Cross (shown in the chapel), the artist shows an almost unique ability to recapture the fervor and strength of medieval work. They are executed with great delicacy and in an intensely personal and contemporary style.

While at present there appear to be few other craftsmen working in the field with such a fresh outlook, the contributions of the two artists mentioned above are of first importance.

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Hard Stone (Pietra Dura) and Mosaic

The use of semi-precious stones and marbles in the formation of objects of art and decorative inlays stems from classical times. Together with the related and similarly derived art of mosaic they form a craft group peculiarly Italian. The foreign visitor has been impressed for centuries by the skill and splendor with which these arts have been practiced on Italian soil from Roman and Byzantine times through the Cosmati work of the middle ages to the achievements of the high Renaissance. The *pietra dura* in the Medici Chapel in the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence is the ultimate elaboration of the medium.

With the decline of Italy's economic resources in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, cheaper substitutes in cement, stucco, and paint had to be found for the monumental employment of these costly crafts. As time passed, the worker in *pietra dura* was forced to limit himself increasingly to the embellishment of minor decorative accessories, the inlaying of table tops, and to lesser trinkets in the making of which he was joined by the worker in those minute Roman mosaics so dear to the Victorian traveler. Though these sufficed to keep alive technical knowledge, they failed to provide any imaginative stimulus or impetus to development.

No serious attempt to utilize the remaining skills of the hard stone worker in a manner more worthy of the material seems to have been attempted until within recent years. Then the designer Galassi made a revival of the craft part of the program of his studio to reunite designer and artisan. Though this studio no longer exists, a number of the resulting products find a place in this exhibition. They embrace a fairly large group of chalices, beakers, cups and bowls, shaped from blocks of rare marbles, onyx, agate, and paesina. These, save for occasional bandings or applied ornaments in silver, are dependent for their effect on the material used. In addition to various objects in mosaic, wood inlay, et cetera, the Galassi group contains two table tops where the *pietra dura* process is used with an imaginative apppreciation of its possibilities in terms of contemporary design.

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It remained for an American artist to grasp not only the aesthetic possibilities of the process but the necessity of realizing them if the craft was not to die of inanition. Immediately after the war, Richard Blow, a long part-time resident of Florence, gathered a few of the remaining craftsmen together and established a workshop on his own property. Artistically the results have been singularly successful. Fortunately, being gifted not only as a designer but also with the necessary means, Blow has been able to continue his experimental output where a less well-equipped enthusiast would have failed. His production is based on the necessity of developing work of the highest quality but of a nature and scale to bring it within a reasonable price range. Though the small pictorial plaques, boxes, table tops, etc., so made are not cheap, since both the material and labor involved are relatively costly, they are well within the reach of that large section of the market able and eager to acquire objects of individuality and high quality. It is interesting to know that much of the rare and semi-precious material needed for these experiments comes from the surplus of the stocks of material accumulated centuries ago for the repair of the Medici chapel.

This particular effort has been outlined in some detail because it is typical of the procedure necessary to the revival of Italy's artistic crafts of a more precious character. Though the products of the Blow workshop at Montici are already known to a limited American public, a representative group is shown in the exhibition toward a wider demonstration of its effective accomplishment.

The example of Montici has encouraged independent craftsmen to follow the paths indicated. Selections from the workshop of Leopoldo Menegatti including a variety of objects and from the shop of G. Ugolini, both of Florence, illustrate the extension of this development.

Unfortunately, the nature of the material has made it difficult to include among the exhibits an adequate representation of the parallel revival in the field of mosaic. The majority of mosaic studios continue the production of religious panels of a dry traditional kind expertly made but almost completely lacking in character. Artists

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of ability have, however, in recent years furnished fresh and lively designs for mosaic decorations in both private and public buildings. Individual ceramists have also produced mosaic panels using their medium. The examples, necessarily small, available for the exhibition come from a variety of sources. The most significant group is from the studio of Goffredo and Renato Gregorini of Venice. These are mostly of natural hard stone and are based on a study of the technique and qualities of pre–Byzantine work. It is easy to see how closely adapted this type of decorative treatment is to contemporary needs.

In the making of three dimensional objects in hard stone practically nothing has been done so far in sequence to the work of the Galassi studios. The relative costliness of such work makes it practicable only for special order. The broad effects of it are obtainable to a degree in alabaster which is not only easily shaped by the skilled worker but can be given considerable variety of color by a newly developed staining process. A few examples in the exhibition will give some indication of its possibilities. Incidentally, a sound re–direction of the traditional craft of the alabaster worker is one of the many problems now facing those actively concerned with the social and artistic problems of the craft movement in post–war Italy.

In this connection some notice should be taken of the almost moribund craft of *scagliola* which was originally developed as a cheaper substitute for *pietra dura* and extensively employed in the eighteenth century. This process which replaces the carefully fitted stone inlays of *pietra dura* by a thin layer of colored cements is capable of giving an extremely resistant and relatively durable surface at a fraction of the cost. When handled with an intelligent understanding of its limitations, the range of effects parallel that of stone inlay. Well designed, it should be eminently suitable for many contemporary uses. It is hoped that some examples will be prepared in time to be shown in the exhibition in demonstration of its possibilities.

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Costume Jewelry and Accessories

The work of the Italian jeweler has been famous for centuries for richness of form and color. Long before Benvenuto Cellini became the arch-type of the egocentric craftsman artist endowed with almost superhuman skill, the goldsmith's guild of Florence had become the nursery of the finest in Italian art. Though gradually losing his pre-eminence in the field with the northward drift of the centers of wealth, the Italian jeweler retained to a great degree the skills gained by long experience. Even the enormous quantity of cheap trinkets produced for the tourist during the last century preserved something of that sense of style and a certain deftness of handling which are his heritage.

As noted previously, it is unfortunate that the high intrinsic value of the materials involved made it impossible to include in this exhibition examples of the brilliant creations in gems and precious stones which come today from the workshops of the leading jewelers in the larger Italian cities. Fortunately, the current fashion for costume jewelry in what may be called high style compensates to a considerable degree for this compulsory omission. Since the entire value of these decorations lies in their design interest, they come even closer than fine jewelry to the expression of purely artistic values. Also after a brief comparative study it seems evident that the freedom and charm of much of the best contemporary Italian jewelry is to some extent the result of the unlimited experimentation possible in humbler but even wider-ranging material.

In large measure the success of the designer of costume jewelry in Italy comes from that understanding of color and texture which seems part of his natural endowment. This ability, as will be noted also in the case of textiles, is at its base less a matter of cultivated taste than the result of a strong emotional response to and instinctive appreciation of the sensual appeal of these factors. The truth of this generalization will in fact be supported by the exhibition as a whole.

In the case of the costume jewelry designed and produced by "Luciana" of Rome, this native faculty has been sharpened by a

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consciously directed taste and quite an extraordinary invention and sense of style. Paste stones of every kind and color, plastics, mother of pearl, coral, shells, even wood, cork and string have been called upon to give some distinctive quality of surface and tone. The effectiveness of these creations lies to a great extent in the individual skill and sensitivity with which their materials are combined. Unlike most costume jewelry, her designs are almost impossible to reproduce except by the same hand. Owing to its variety the "Luciana" production well epitomizes the best Italian work in the field.

The designs of Eva Carocci, also of Rome, are in complete contrast with those above both in extent and kind. Her output is limited to a relatively few items composed of motives derived from classical sources but accented and combined in accordance with today's taste. Since the Carocci pieces are carried out in silver or silver-gilt they are in a sense true jewelry.

The Italian flair for color is again in evidence in the glass bead jewelry of Berengo-Gardin of Venice. This, while in essence traditional, has an individual and contemporary quality resulting from a restudy and personal interpretation of the jewelry shown in ancient Venetian paintings.

The use of ceramic techniques in the making of costume jewelry and personal ornaments is represented in the exhibition by the work of Carlo Barbasetti of Rome and Neera Gatti of Venice.

It the section of metalwork some mention was made of certain costume accessories in silver. Various other items of the sort deserve special attention among the exhibits. The cases, vanities and compacts in tortoise shell by Michele Scotti of Naples are examples in point. Beautifully executed and effective through their very simplicity, good proportion and ingenuity in construction, they demonstrate that it is still possible to attain distinction in a traditional material so generally vulgarized by plastic imitation.

The revitalization of the ancient Neapolitan crafts of coral, cameo, and ivory still remains an unsolved problem. Here and there are examples, however, some included in the exhibition, which show a creative stirring.

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Some discussion of the leather craft seems appropriate here in connection with the field of costume accessories. The making of decorative objects in tooled leather, which originated probably as an offshoot of the art of bookbinding, has become a Florentine stereotype vulgarized by its very success as an article of commerce. The importunities of the commercial buyer and the fear of spoiling an established market have seemingly negated any urge to experimentation.

Aided by a more enlightened clientele, the work of Fasoli of Florence offers evidence that a revolt against these inhibitions is possible if demand develops. Leather responds well to carefully selected dyes and simple molding. It has little need for further embellishment. Similar principles are employed in the costume accessories made by Pierantoni of Rome and are capable of still further development. The writer understands that other efforts are now being made to break the bondage of meaningless gilding and tooling. Some of the results may be ready in time for showing in the exhibition.

On the whole, the most successful commercial production in the field is to be found in the fashion-driven ingenuity shown by the designers of women's bags, purses, and shoes. Though the demands of novelty tend to result in much that is of little lasting value, a fair proportion of the best high style production reaches a level worthy of inclusion in the exhibition. Here again the best results are achieved by tasteful and striking combinations of texture and color.

Textiles and Embroideries

With the exception of ceramics this is the largest section in the exhibition and also one of the most difficult to summarize.

The textile arts have always been among the principal expressions of Italian craft skill. The silks of Lucca, the woolen cloths, silks, velvets, and brocades of Florence, Venice, and Genoa were among the chief articles of Italy's world-wide commerce during and after the middle ages. The fragments that remain still maintain their position

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as standards of quality and design in spite of the later dominance of French looms and the needles of France and the lower Rhine.

It is hardly surprising that the monumental power of her repertoire of traditional design still holds sway over Italian production, for of all the useful arts that of textiles is the most conservative. In spite of this overwhelming heritage it is all the more significant that Italy now produces such a large volume of independent design in all textile fields that the representative group shown in the exhibition had to be chosen with considerable restraint.

It will be noted that these newer designs include relatively few of those radical departures from convention into purely linear abstractions which dominate contemporary textile design elsewhere. When the process allows freedom of motive the Italian designer still prefers natural forms even though conventionalized and treated with a certain fantastic license. His reliance is basically upon color. In the fabrics produced on a larger commercial scale, the relatively simple geometry of the hand loom is observed in woven stuffs while greater freedom naturally accompanies the printed process.

The printed materials distributed by Myricae in Rome, who sponsors the work of many of the best designers, are notable not only for their inventiveness in pattern but also for the novelty, daring, and rich tonal balance of their color schemes. This is also true in the narrower range of the silks, linens and cottons decorated by the silk screen process by MITA of Nervi. The silks, cottons, and linens designed by Fede Cheti of Milan for both costumes and for draperies have already gained a European reputation. Predominantly large in scale, they are remarkable for their bold individuality and sense of style. Fornasetti, also of Milan, noted for his clever adaptation of Victorian motives in his printed screens, produces textiles in a similar vein.

In the field of textiles particularly adapted for individualized costume, the weaves of Maria Chiara Galotti of Anacapri and the prints of Irene Kowaliska of Positano were selected as representative of the individual productions of many designers in various parts of the country. In the work of Galotti there is an exceptionally happy union of inventiveness and taste. The Italian sensitivity to color and

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texture reaches here a high level. Particularly interesting are her successful experiments with combinations of raffia and the normal fibres which she also mixes with artificial fibres. Kowaliska's block printed designs on already fabricated materials are sensitive and personal developments of folk art tradition drawn from oriental and central European as well as Italian sources.

The limits of these notes make it impossible to discuss in detail the interest and variety in the innumerable drapery fabrics in cotton, linen and hemp produced on hand looms. These range from plain and striped open weaves to richly patterned and colored fabrics of all types. Many of these are specially shaped and patterned for table use. The great variety of these beautifully colored designs is more or less novel to the American market. Sturdy in weave and with a texture interest in harmony with contemporary decorative ideas, these table covers and sets, particularly those in hemp, are better adapted to the majority of present day needs than the exquisitely embroidered damask tablecloths and napery for which the workrooms of Bellini and other Florentine establishments are already famous. The selections made from this latter group represent the development of designs more in conformity with current taste than is the bulk of their production.

Italian conditions make it feasible for even large commercial producers to supplement machine weaves with the output of hand looms. This is done whenever certain qualities and textures are required. In this connection particular attention should be called again to comparatively recent developments in the production of decorative textiles in hemp. The qualities of this material almost unknown in America for such purposes can be seen in the work of many individual producers. On a larger commercial scale they are well exemplified by the wide range of colors and designs offered by Linificio & Canapificio Nazionale, a large Milanese firm, which has developed this production mainly after the war. Their present output illustrates the qualitative possibilities of industrial production where competent art direction is combined with Italian aptitude.

This is shown with equal effect in the woolen suitings, particularly the tweeds, produced commercially by such concerns as STAR

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of Rimini and Arte Artigianato Tessile of Rome. Here again the individuality and variety of the production in both color and design even within the necessarily limited range of such material is convincing proof of Italian mastery in the field.

The effect of the new urge to break through the limitations of tradition is shown even in the making of special fabrics for ecclesiastical use. The exhibition includes some gold brocades shown by Bevilacqua of Venice and it is hoped that financial considerations will not prevent the inclusion of some representation of the exquisite vestments made and embroidered in the studio of Assirelli of Rome.

The mention of some individual producers and the omission of other contributors is an unfortunate necessity which it is hoped will be partly rectified by the producer–designer list in the appendix. It is also hoped that the exhibits selected will convey to the visitor the enthusiasm felt by the committee for Italian contemporary attainment in this field. The newer developments in tablewear so well adjusted to contemporary needs are particularly worthy of attention. They alone provide convincing evidence of the creative vitality and imagination present in the new movement.

Strawwork

The use of straw and allied natural fibres in the making of hats and basket wares of various types has undoubtedly been a traditional folk craft in Italy since pre–classical times. It is impossible to say when the primitive techniques of straw weaving were elaborated beyond the needs of simple utility. The material was so commonplace that objects made of it were not likely to be preserved beyond their term of usefulness. The straw hats exported from Leghorn, the port of Florence, were famous for their fine texture long before the advent of the panama. The volume of their exportation vouches for the existence of an industry of considerable importance as early as the eighteenth century. It is reasonable to infer that the gradual decline in the European demand for this commodity during the last century furnished the major impetus for Italian ingenuity to find other outlets

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for the special skills required. Whether or not this earlier straw industry was centered in Tuscany, it seems to have been chiefly in Florence, and within a generation or so, that the straw worker was provided with redirection and new fields of activity. A prominent part, if not the sole leadership in this movement, was taken by the older generation of the Paoli family whose enterprise still dominates the trade today.

Most of the strawwork selected for the exhibition comes directly and indirectly from this firm which in addition to its own production also styles and distributes the work of others. Hats, shoes, handbags, and costume accessories of all descriptions, in natural and colored straw or raffia in a bewildering variety of weaves, utilize the capacity of the material to the full. A similar ingenuity and sense of design is apparent in the baskets, hampers and other incidental household equipment, from table mats to beach umbrellas, for which the fertile Italian imagination can find employment for this cheap and flexible material. Note particularly the gaiety and humor of the straw toys and the apparently inexhaustible invention that goes into the making of small trinkets of every sort.

The color and fantasy of this Florentine type is supplemented further south by the local strawwork of Naples. This with its more complex open pattern and rigid framework is really a sort of straw lace and is well represented by the boxes, baskets, and mats produced by Angelina Migliaccio of Naples.

It should be noted here that one particularly attractive feature of some of the furniture shown in the exhibition is the decorative quality of the raffia and similar fibres used in place of or as a base for upholstery.

Toys

The last section refers briefly to the use of straw in the making of toys. While toy production has never been one of the leading craft arts of Italy, the firm of Lenci of Turin is famous for its dolls. This organization justly prides itself on the care and artistry with which

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the faces and expressions of its products are finished and individualized. The costumes too, based for the most part on the picturesque though rapidly vanishing regional types, are made with exemplary care and attention to scale and detail. Numerous animal toys in cloth are also made by this firm. These are most successful when they depend least on a second hand Disney whimsey.

Though many other firms make dolls of similar type and approximate in quality, a more highly personalized and individual production is exemplified by the dolls and accessories designed and made under the direction of Mariuccia De Lord of Asolo in the Veneto. This beautifully made and jointed doll, Cristina by name, is remarkable for the variety and quality of her equipment which is adapted to every activity of her fortunate owner.

From nearby Venice comes a great variety of toys in felt designed with great ingenuity and feeling for form and color. These productions of Navarra are particularly delightful expressions of the real Italian comic spirit. A vein of similarly delightful fantasy may be seen in the puppets and marionettes designed and made by Maria Signorelli Volpicelli of Rome. Though the striking color of these cleverly constructed little personalities fails to carry on to the screen, they have been used with great success for television broadcasting. Thus has the traditional Punchinello and his family been brought up to date.

A few examples of larger and mobile toys in painted wood were selected from the booth of Mario Serena at the Industrial Fair in Milan. The committee was particularly impressed by the simple good sense of their design and their rich but well adjusted coloring which are a welcome relief from the crudity or insipidity of the tones so often used on similar playthings.

Industrial Design

The prevalence of handicraft or semi-handicraft production in relatively small units characteristic of Italy's individualized output does not exclude the development of highly industrialized production where this is essential. In order to complete this picture of

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contemporary Italian design it was therefore considered necessary to include some examples of her attainment in the purely industrial phase. Given the right conditions, it is here that the universally recognized scientific and mechanical skills of the Italian people combine most effectively with their ingenuity and sense of form.

The mechanized business and office equipment produced by Olivetti of Ivrea is as carefully considered for its formal visual appeal as it is for the efficiency of its engineering, and ranks with the best of its kind in world production. The all round success of this highly integrated organization is probably due to a considerable extent to the ability of its executives to translate the Italian sense of family solidarity into terms of organizational unity.

In its popular and low priced models also the Fiat organization has succeeded in keeping that sense of fitness and proportion which has made the Italian designer a leader in the automotive field. Even the motor scooters and motorcycles that are at present making the average Italian street a nerve wrecking experience are designed with an effectiveness that makes them pleasing to look at when at rest.

Last but not least, it is hoped that the visitor to the exhibition will be able to get even more than visual satisfaction out of the machine which produces that nectar of all coffees, the *espresso*.

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Five Special Interiors

The material discussed previously in this section covered the various single categories of applied design shown in the exhibition. As mentioned earlier in the handbook, it was felt that a representative presentation of Italian activity should include also a group of interiors to supplement the individual exhibits. On the basis of a carefully considered program to cover the principal aspects and kinds of decoration, five themes are offered: a dining room by Gio Ponti, a living–dining room for a modest house by Carlo Mollino, a terrace room by Luigi Cosenza, a private chapel by Roberto Menghi, and a foyer for a marionette theater by Fabrizio Clerici. The visitor will thus be able to enter more fully into the spirit and sense of Italy's contribution; and here in these complete rooms ready for use, he will find in even more comprehensive terms the fresh variety, the same vitality (however diversely expressed), and freedom from sterile intellectualism, noted again and again in the exhibition.

The pages which follow present five distinct architectural problems. Because each was resolved in such a highly individual way, it was felt that the public would be further interested to read the architect's own exposition of his approach. Therefore, in addition to the biographical information, the lists of contributors to each interior, and photographs of the rooms or, as in the case of the chapel, the more pertinent architectural plan, the chief emphasis is on the words of the five participants themselves.

A number of individual craftsmen whose work was selected for exhibition were also called upon by the architects to contribute to the completion of the interiors. Among them, for example, is the ceramist Gambone who furnished the tile floor for the terrace; Venini executed the glassware after Ponti's special designs, and, the architect

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also invited Melotti to provide two ceramic figures for the dining room, where MITA reveals another facet of its activity in the hand-loomed rug. In the chapel even richer examples of the enamels of Martinotti are to be seen.

Some of the participating architects in turn also made further contributions to the exhibition. Other furniture designed by Mollino will be found, and a small group of porcelains designed by Ponti for Richard-Ginori. Although interesting in themselves, however, these additional examples did not seem to satisfy the over-all picture desired, and so in order to present these architects more fully as well as to give a more complete view of Italian design today, each man was also asked to furnish the exhibition with a series of photographs of his works, selected by himself. Thus Clerici, although a practicing architect and interior designer, preferred to present examples of his work which for him were more significant: stage designs and costumes, and drawings. Mollino, on the other hand, wishing to be known as the complete architect he is, illustrated above all his activities as a designer of buildings. Ponti has also furnished an exhibit of his magazine *Domus*, so significant in the fields covered by this exhibition.

A word should also be said in praise of the constructors of the interiors. These studios, whose usual function is the outfitting of ships and bars, etc., matched ably with their craftsmanship the ingenuity of the original designs which had severe space limitations and which had to allow for repeated dismantling for shipment from to museum. In the true artisan spirit, the rooms are painstakingly executed throughout, even where the visitor's eye will not penetrate.

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FABRIZIO CLERICI - *Foyer for Marionette Theater*



Born in Milan, 1913; architectural degree in Rome, where he lives. As an architect he has constructed houses, offices, and shops in Sicily, Venice, and Milan; he has also designed interiors. For the Rome Opera and the music festivals of Florence and Venice he has designed sets and costumes for the works of such varied composers as Stravinsky, Purcell, Britten, Monteverdi, and Lulli. His drawings, lithographs and etchings have served as book illustrations. As a painter he has had one-man shows in the principal galleries of Milan, Rome, Florence, Venice, and New York, and he is represented in private collections in France, Italy, and America.

When I was asked to contribute to this exhibition, from among the various themes I did not hesitate to request the foyer of a children's theater, an extraordinary theme.

Today children grow up and while the time away in places often not adapted to their formation and development; the playthings made for them also contribute to falsify their education. For want of invention, lethal weapons are reduced to minuscule proportions and become toys. Childhood deserves amusements which are fanciful, and not games which simulate mortal combat and the catastrophes we know.

Childhood should return in memory to the grown-up as a magic world where fantasy and reality existed in such perfect union that they were indistinguishable, one from the other. Fable, poetry, places of amazement.

That is why, when I was given the occasion to study the theme of a child's theater, I imagined it decorated as the illustrated pages of a story book, so that every object, every wall, should make him marvel, should divert and inspire him.

In surroundings different from reality, he forgets the talk of the grown-ups and becomes almost automatically the hero of a fairy story; as an adult the memory will remain with him of certain Sunday afternoons at the marionette theater, walking through the fanciful corridors of the unreal, as in a wondrous dream.

F. C.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Execution supervised by Enrico Bettarini, Florence, on the basis of the architect's designs. Painted by Ferdinando Gelli, Silvio Calvino, and Piero Martini, Florence. Wood sculptures translated into three dimensional plaster models by Iorio Vivarelli, Pistoia, and carved by Bartolozzi Maioli, Florence; polychromed by Pierino Fallani, Florence. Panorama reproduced by Giorgio Cipriano from drawings by Fabius Gugel, Rome. Motor by Salvadori Brothers, Florence. Construction of the interior by Ernesto Corti and Sons, Florence.

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LUIGI COSENZA – *Terrace Room*



Born in Naples, 1905; architectural degree from the university of that city where he now practices, engaged largely in the reconstruction of areas severely damaged during the war. Author of a recent book on modern architecture.

This terrace served as the point of departure for no formal academic style, but rather for a return to the fount of our artisan tradition which has always made itself felt in the most elementary and genuine expressions of man's life. That is why I have drawn my inspiration from the patio of a house that is Mediterranean in type, seeing in such an atmosphere neither mundane social life nor abstract refinement, but simply a pleasing invitation to repose.

The entire furnishing was designed from this view of the problem: The floor of majolica tiles represents a colorful interpretation of the Gulf of Naples. I selected blinds from Amalfi decorated with motives drawn from the local tradition, and the rush shades which are used in the orange groves to protect the blossoms and on the patios to protect the complexions of the beautiful girls of Sorrento. The Vesuvian lava pots are porous but sturdy. The structure of the furniture follows the artisan functionalism of our time, adhering to the form of the hands and the position of the body.

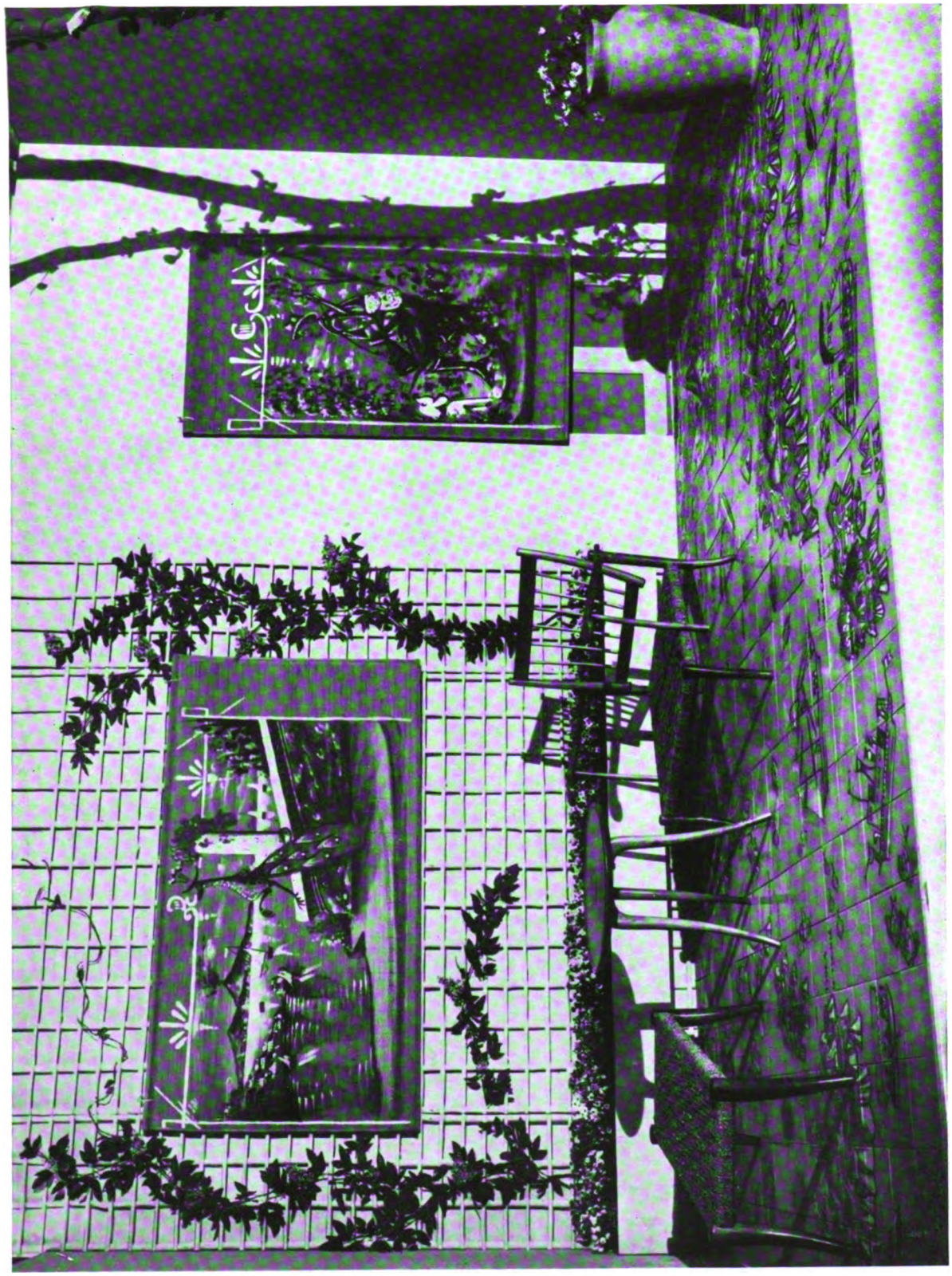
And so, avoiding academic schematizing, I have evaluated the local elements where they exist, in an effort to find the real expression of their function, offering thereby a terrace with direct, simple appeal – for relaxation.

L. C.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Floor by Guido Gambone, Florence, formally of Vietri sul Mare.
Blinds, rushes, pots etc., from local sources in the Campagna region.
Furniture based on traditional forms interpreted by the architect.
Execution of the terrace by Segheria Industria Legno, Naples.

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ROBERTO MENGHI - *Private Chapel*



Born in Milan, 1920; studied in England; architectural degree from Milan *Politecnico* in 1944. In Milan, sometimes in collaboration with others, he has constructed an important office building, apartment houses, a cinema theater, veterans' houses; he has designed fair buildings in Milan, Turin, Padua, Bari, and Rome, and hotels on the French Riviera.

I conceived the chapel as for a family of five or six, and studied its form to evoke concentration and prayer. In both the architecture and the decoration I wanted to renew and interpret – not revolutionize – the traditional liturgical requirement. It is not possible, in my opinion, to treat such a theme differently without risking the betrayal of the very subject.

The pews were arranged ring-like around the altar as an extension of the Eucharistic table, permitting the faithful to pay close attention to the priest and to take communion easily and without distraction. The altar itself, in beaten copper, represents the reaping of the grain and the pressing of the grape, the two elements of the Eucharist: bread and wine. The tabernacle symbolizes charity: the pelican that feeds its young from its own body. Behind the altar, the wall is hung with natural-colored linen which is embroidered with the symbols of the passion. In the tradition of tapestries, it was chosen principally to enbance the copper altar and the crystal cross and to create a background that was restful and intimate at the same time (uniform light color, and warm material). The carpet, with its design in relief of the symbol of peace, for private chapels is favored by liturgical tradition; it adds also to the feeling of intimacy and forms an effective encounter in color and texture with the linen of the wall.

Basing this project on architectonic form and the arrangement and decorative design of the few indispensable furnishings, I have tried to realize a warm and harmonious atmosphere for spontaneous prayer.

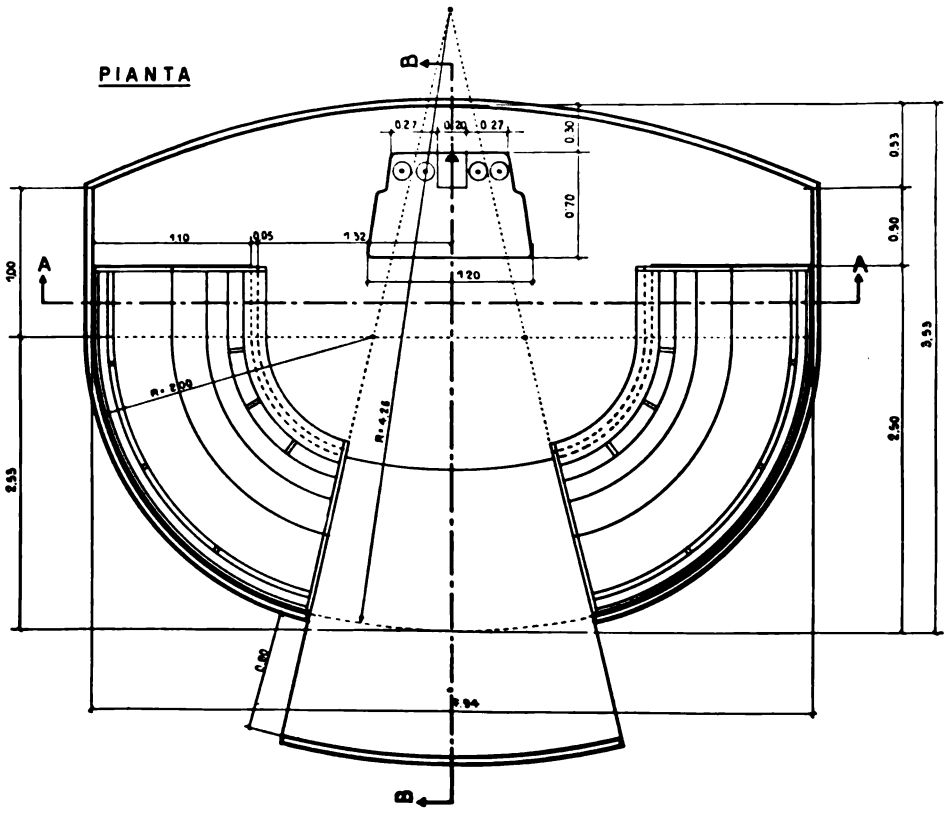
R. M.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Altar and tabernacle, in accordance with the architect's requirements, conceived and executed by Giacomo Manzù, Milan. Cartoon for front wall hanging by Giacomo Manzù; linen by Linificio & Canapificio Nazionale, Milan; embroidered by Tina Tasselli under the supervision of Enrico Bettarini, Florence. Carpet designed by Piero Fornasetti and executed by Stoffarredo, Milan. Silver candlesticks designed by the architect. Construction of the chapel by Arch. E. Monti-Cantieri-Milanesi, Milan.

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CARLO MOLLINO – *Living-Dining Room*



Born in Turin, 1905; architectural degree with highest honors from that city in 1931. Traveled and worked in France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and Norway. Lives in Turin where he practices architecture and is a member of the university's architectural faculty. He is the winner of numerous important competitions. He has published books on architecture and its aesthetics and criticism, on photography, and monographs on Picasso and Grosz.

Because this room was planned for a modest apartment, two factors were taken into especial consideration: the restricted space, in which each element would have to serve several purposes – for convenience and necessity, and also for achieving variety of arrangement; and the financial limitation, which imposed a certain simplification and the advisability of units which lent themselves to mass production.

The dining table may be folded up against the wall. The tea table in three narrow tiers may be circulated easily among the pieces of furniture, through halls, etc., and while still laden may be transformed into a normal breakfast table. The sofa may also serve as a guest bed, and may be inclined in many ways. The furniture is covered in Resinflex, *an artificial fabric resembling silk, which is washable. The fluted panels may be used to form wall partitions, cabinets, drawers, shelves, a writing desk, etc.; although mass produced, they offer unlimited possibilities of combination (they have moveable grooves) and of size (they are built in six centimeter units); these panels are warp-proof, constructed of sturdy wood without glue.*

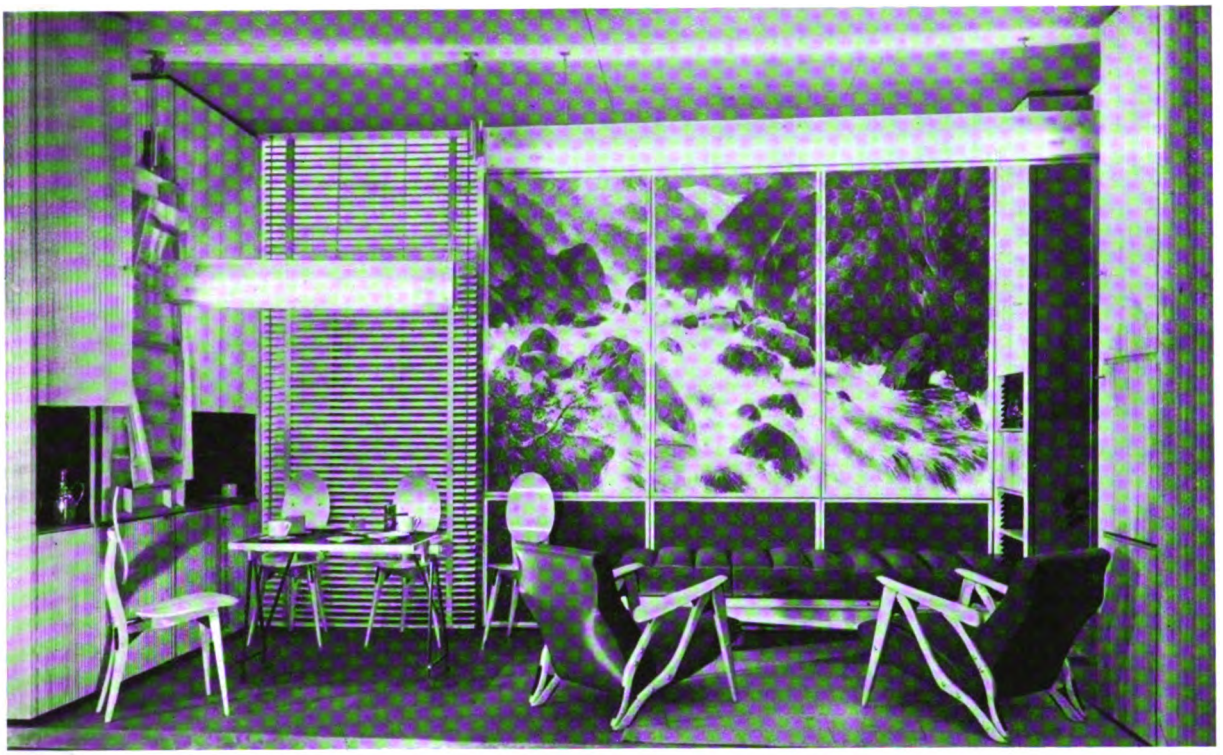
Although destined for an exhibition, I have intentionally presented this interior with no more elaborate finishing by the constructors than would be possible for any other similar room meant for a modest private house.

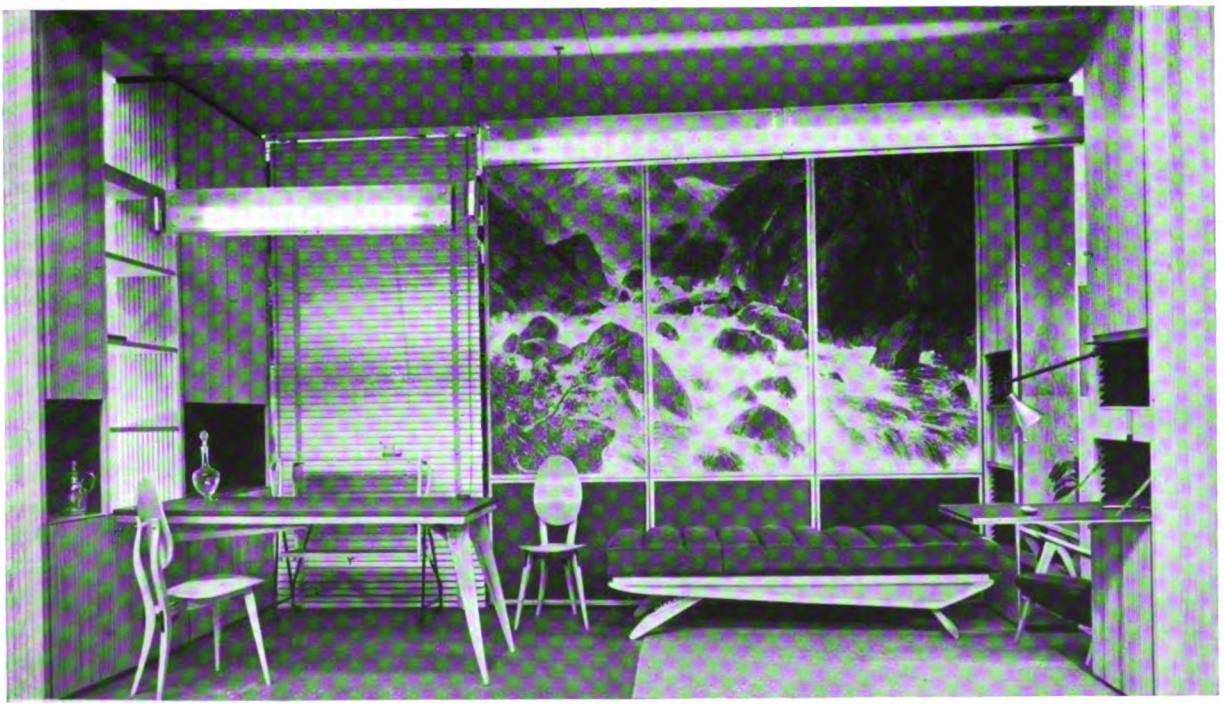
C. M.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Construction of the furniture and the interior by Apelli, F. – Varesio, L., Turin.
Lighting apparatus designed by the architect, executed by P. M. Nord, Turin.
Furniture upholstery (Resinflex) by BEMAT, Turin.
Interior accessories by Richard-Ginori, Dona, and others.

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GIO PONTI - *Dining Room*



Born in Milan, 1891; architectural degree, Milan *Politecnico*, 1921. Founder and director of the magazines *Domus* and *Stile*; organizer of many of the Milan Triennale exhibitions. Architect for many important structures including the Montecatini and Edison Building, Milan; the Villa Donegani, Bordighera; the World Exposition of the Catholic Press, Vatican City (1936); the mathematics building, University of Rome; mountain hotel, Val Martello. He is the author of books on architecture, and is also a painter (frescoes at the University of Padua), designer in decorative arts, furniture, and industry, and has done interiors of houses and such ships as Conte Grande and Giulio Cesare.

Since this dining room was intended for exhibition, I have deliberately sought to make an "exhibition piece" to demonstrate with every item various possibilities of Italian imagination and artistic production in the numerous fields.

The walls of the room not only display three decorative elements by Fornasetti but also offer three examples of wall–furniture combinations. The long wall contains a disappearing bar; one side wall contains a cabinet which opens to reveal a credenza; and the other side wall has a fireplace which can be closed in a cupboard.

The aspect of the room changes completely as the panels are open or shut. When the cabinets are closed, the room has a predominately white background; when they are open, the emphasis is on the special Italian wood, radica ferrarese. *Note that in the fireplace wall, the large ceramics in the niches form a part of the decorative scheme whether the cabinet is open or closed, and the openings in the folding panels frame in turn the lights and the niches.*

The brass coffee table shows how a piece of rare marble may be presented behind glass.

Please note also the plates which, since they are used only for decoration, execute in relief traditional Italian patterns. The big "Freudian" chessmen in ceramics show "what is in the heart of the king, the queen, the knight, the horse..." *G. P.*

CONTRIBUTORS:

Decoration of walls, chairs (including seats and backs) and table by Piero Fornasetti, Milan. Glass door painted by Piero Fornasetti or Edina Altara. Glasses and bottles designed by the architect, executed by Venini, Murano (Venice). The two figures in ceramics of Orpheus and Eurydice by Fausto Melotti, Milan. All other ceramics executed by the artisans of Richard–Ginori, Doccia (Florence), under the guidance of the architect. Carpet executed by MITA, Nervi (Genoa). Lighting apparatus designed by the architect, executed by Giordano Chiesa, Milan. The complete interior, including furniture, constructed by Giordano Chiesa, Milan.

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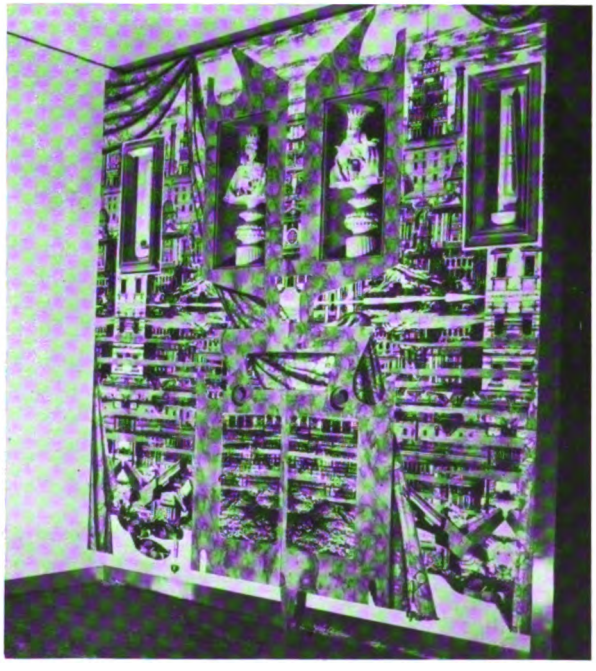












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IN CONCLUSION

It is hoped that these brief summaries of the principal fields of craft and industrial production in the arts which give expression to the spirit of a revived Italy will be of help to the interested visitor, and that the guide as a whole will lead to a fuller understanding of the broad significance and purpose of the exhibition. These pages will have little meaning unless the material shown provides that keen pleasure and enjoyment it is intended to give directly with no other interpreter. All explanation and verbal comment must be secondary to the things themselves.

It is also to be hoped that the exhibition will give an American public, always eager for the best, an immediate and vivid impression of the extent of the beauty and richness provided by these objects of daily use that Italy offers us today out of the vitality of her present, resting, but not relying, on the greatness of her past.

It is to be hoped further that, stimulated by these impressions, the visitor will wish, each according to his means, to take advantage of the opportunities offered of enriching his own surroundings by the ownership of the things that appeal most strongly to him. These things are not rarities for enjoyment and study as part of man's past, but are of our life today, made to be handled and used, enjoyed and lived with as among the greatest privileges within our common reach.

Finally, the organizers of the exhibition trust that the American public will understand the real need that exists for this practical appreciation of the work of the Italian artisan. This need is mutual for we need what he has to offer fully as much as he needs our active support. By such an exchange lies the most enduring way to that international respect and cooperation so needed in the world today.

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APPENDIX OF DESIGNERS (D) AND PRODUCERS (P) PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION

(*For contributors to the five special interiors see pages 52 to 60*)

FURNITURE

Franco Albini, Milan	D
Apelli F. – Varesio L. & Co., Turin	P
Arte Luce, Milan	DP
Azucena, Milan	DP
Caccia Dominione, Milan	D
Giuseppe Capri, Florence	DP
Lio Carminati, Milan	D
Massimo Carola, Naples	DP
Casa e Giardino, Milan	DP
Giovanni Cellerino, Turin	P
Guido Chiappe, Chiavari	DP
Corrado Corradi, Milan	D
Enrico Del Monte, Chiavari	DP
Paolo De Poli, Padua	DP
Fontana Arte (Luigi Fontana), Milan	DP
Ignazio Gardella, Milan	D
Cesare Lacca, Milan	DP
Vittorio Lombardi, Milan	DP
Pietro Maffeis, Cantù (Como)	DP
Carlo Mollino, Turin	D
Guglielmo Pecorini, Florence	DP
Giambattista Sanguinetti, Chiavari,	DP
Seguso, Venice (lighting apparatus)	DP

INTARSIA DECORATION

Antonio Attardi, Sorrento	DP
Enrico Bernardi, Bologna	DP
Scuola d'Arte di Sorrento,	DP
Scuola Professionale Vincenzo Scamozzi, Palmanova (Udine)	DP

CERAMICS *

Afro (Basaldella), Rome	D
Aldo Ajo, Rome	DP
Roberto Algisi, Bergamo	D
Arte Artigianato Orobico di Luciano Rumi, Milan	DP
Fratelli Bagni, Ponte a Signa (Florence)	DP
Carlo Barbasetti, Rome	DP
Otello Bernardi, Milan	D
Enrico Bettarini, Florence	D
Angelo Biancini, Castel Bolognese (Ravenna)	DP
Nello Bini, La Vela, Florence	DP
Luigi Broggini, Milan	DP
C. A. C. F., Faenza	DP
Antonia Campi, Varese	DP
La Casa dell'Arte, Albisola (Savona)	DP
Pietro and Andrea Cascella, Rome	DP
Annamaria Cesarini Cascella, Rome	DP
Luigi Castiello, Naples	DP
Ceramica Arno, Florence	DP
Ceramica Etruria, Colle Val d'Elsa (Florence)	DP

* In this field the designer often executes the object as well, while the producer may be considered the owner of the kiln.

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Victor Cerrato, Turin	DP
Giorgio Cipriani, Florence	D
Pietro Consagra, Rome	D
Tito Corti, Capraia (Florence)	DP
Otello De Maria, Vicenza	D
Bonaventura De Nardis, Rapino (Chieti)	DP
Giambattista De Salvo, Albisola (Savona)	D
Armando De Santi, Urbino	DP
Matteo Di Lieto, Amalfi	DP
Ernestine Cannon — D'Agostino, Salerno	DP
Agenore Fabbri, Milan	DP
Marcello Fantoni, Florence	DP
Fernando Farulli, Florence	D
† Salvatore Fancello, Albisola (Savona)	D
Lucio Fontana, Albisola (Savona)	DP
Galassi Workshop, Rome	DP
Guido Gambone, Florence	DP
Franco Garelli, Turin	D
Neera Gatti, Venice	DP
Riccardo Gatti, Faenza	DP
Lelio Gelli, Naples	DP
Franco Gentilini, Rome	D
Il Giardino, Florence	DP
Rolando Hettner, Il Molino, Torno (Como)	DP
Irene Kowaliska, Positano	D
Cesare Lacca, Milan	DP
Leoncillo Leonardi, Rome	DP
La Lucciola, Vicenza	DP
Ugo Lucerni, Florence	DP
Giuseppe Macedonio, Naples	DP
Fosco Martini, Florence	DP
Domenico Matteucci, Faenza	DP
Giuseppe Mazzotti, Albisola (Savona)	DP
Fausto Melotti, Milan	DP
Arnaldo Miniati, Florence	DP
Myricae, Rome	DP
Luigi Montanarini, Rome	D
Mario Morelli, Florence	DP
Luigi Motolese, Grottaglie (Taranto)	DP
Franco Normanni, Bergamo	D
Vincenzo Pinto, Vietri sul Mare (Salerno)	DP
Gio Ponti, Milan	D
Richard-Ginori, Doccia (Florence)	DP
Fabio Rieti, Rome	DP
Domenico Rossi, Milan	D
Bruno Samà, S. Andrea Ionio (Catanzaro)	DP
Aligi Sassu, Milan	DP
Angelo Savelli, Rome	D
A. di Spilimbergo, Milan	D
Orfeo Tamburi, Rome	D
Guerrino Tramonti, Faenza	DP
Prisco and Urbano Zaccagnini, Florence	DP

GLASS

Barovier & Toso, Murano (Venice)	DP
Alfredo Barbini, Murano (Venice)	DP
Erwin Burger, Milan	DP
Giacomo Cappellin, Florence	D
† Pietro Chiesa, Milan	D
Fontana Arte (Luigi Fontana)	DP
Nason & Moretti, Murano (Venice)	DP
Flavio Poli, Venice	D
Pietro Rigatti, Montelupo Fiorentino (Florence)	DP
E. & C. Taddei, Florence & Empoli	DP
Gennaro Tulino, Naples	DP
Giuseppe Torres, Venice	DP
Seguso, Murano (Venice)	DP
Paolo Venini, Murano (Venice)	DP
Vetreria Etrusca, Empoli	DP

METALWORK AND ENAMELS

Argenteria Finzi, Milan	DP
Arte Artigianato Orobico di Luciano Rumi, Milan	P
Pietro Bassi, Alzano Lombardo (Bergamo)	D
Enrico Bettarini, Florence	D

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Lio Carminati, Milan	D
Casa e Giardino, Milan	DP
Armando Castellani, Florence	DP
Ceramiche 3 Amici, Florence	DP
Alvaro Cianfanelli, Florence	DP
Amerigo De Leonardis, Spoltore (Pescara)	DP
Paolo De Poli, Padua	DP
Dona, Milan	DP
Nino Ferrari, Brescia	DP
Ugo Fornetti, Florence	DP
Cesare Lacca, Milan	DP
Luigi Martinotti, Milan	DP
Luigi Matteucci, Faenza	DP
Mario Morelli, Florence	DP
Ettore Porciani, Pistoia	DP
Emilio Quartapelle, S. Sisto (Aquila)	DP
Umberto Rosa, Venice	DP
Oscar Rulli, Florence	DP
Carlo Russo, Milano	DP
Giuseppe Sisini, Bologna	DP
Maurizio Tempestini, Florence	D
Ugo Trevisan, Turin	DP

HARD STONE (*PIETRA DURA*) AND MOSAIC

Richard Blow – Montici Workshop S. Margherita in Montici (Florence)	DP
Pietro and Annamaria Cesarini Cascella, Rome	DP
Cooperativa Artieri Alabastro, Volterra	DP
Eugenio Fegarotti, Rome	DP
Galassi Workshop, Rome	DP
Goffredo and Renato Gregorini, Venice	DP
Irene Kowaliska, Positano	DP
Amedeo Lastri & Son, Florence	P
Leopoldo Menegatti, Florence	DP
Monticelli Mosaic Studios, Rome	P
Costantino Nivola, Florence	D
Giacomo Prampolini, Rome	D
G. Ugolini, Florence	DP

COSTUME JEWELRY AND ACCESSORIES

Carlo Barbasetti, Rome	DP
Berengo-Gardin, Venice	DP
Carlo De Agostini, Turin	DP
Francesco Fede, Naples	DP
Salvatore Ferragamo, Florence	DP
Ferraresi, Florence	DP
M. Fiamma Kappa, Mantua	DP
Creazioni Frattegiani, Florence	DP
Giuliano Fratti, Milan	DP
Neera Gatti, Venice	DP
Guccio Gucci, Florence	DP
Emma Ivancich, Capri	DP
Cesare Lacca, Milan	DP
Luciana, Rome	DP
Myricae, Rome	DP
Pierantoni, Rome	DP
Michele Scotti, Naples	DP
Valentino (Bolognesi), Florence	DP
Nello Deliziosi (leather), Perugia	DP
Luigi Fasoli (leather), Florence	DP

TEXTILES AND EMBROIDERIES

Antico Setificio Fiorentino, Florence	DP
Ars Labor Amor, Rome	Rep
Arte Artigianato Tessile, Rome	DP
Zamiro Balgera, Chiuro (Sondrio)	DP
Antonia Battini, Rome	DP
Emilia Bellini, Florence	DP
Luigi Bertozzi, Gambettola (Romagna)	P
Enrico Bettarini, Florence	D
Luigi Bevilacqua, Venice	P
Geggia Bronzini, Venice	DP
Cora Calegaris, Rome	D
Fede Cheti, Milan	DP
Quirica Dettori, Nule (Sassari)	DP
Fernando Farulli, Florence	D

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Eugenio Fegarotti, Rome	D	Aldo Riguccini, Città di Castello (Florence)	DP
Attilio Fumagalli, Milan	DP	Rizzi-Draghi, Milan	DP
Mario Gallenga, Rome	DP	Oscar Saccarotti, Genoa	D
Boza Kozak, Rome	D	Scuola Italiana Alberto Assirelli, Rome	DP
Irene Kowaliska, Positano	DP	Scuola di Tessitura di Rovezzano, Florence	DP
Linificio & Canapificio Nazionale, Milan	DP	S. T. A. R., Settimello (Rimini)	DP
Mannini & Marandino, Florence	DP	Tina Tasselli, Florence	P
Teresa Massetti, Rome	D	Telaio d'Oro, Florence	DP
M. I. T. A., Nervi (Genoa)	DP	Tessilarte, Florence	DP
Myricae, Rome	DP	Il Tessitore Azzurro (Gaetano de Martino), Capri	DP
Josima Ortensi, Rome	D	La Tessitrice dell'Isola (Maria Chiara Galotti), Anacapri	DP
Fidia Piatelli, Rome	D	3 Chic, Turin	DP
Gustavo Pulitzer, Genoa	D		
Mariuccia Quaia, Venice	DP		
Emanuele Rambaldi, Chiavari	D		
Guido Ravasi, Como	DP		

STRAWWORK

Raffaello Bettini, Signa (Florence)	DP	Angelina Migliaccio, Naples	DP
Alcide Nepi, Florence	DP	Emilio Paoli, Florence	DP

TOYS

Raffaello Bettini, Signa (Florence)	DP	Riccardo Navarra Prodotti D'Arte, Venice	DP
Lio Carminati, Milan	D	Emilio Paoli, Florence	DP
Casa e Giardino, Milan	DP	† Arminio Scialoia, Montemiletto (Avellino)	DP
Cristina (Mariuccia de Lord Carosio), Asolo (Treviso)	DP	Antonio Serena, Milan	DP
Ennebi Studio (Nene Bardelli), Florence	DP	Maria Signorelli Volpicelli, Rome	DP
Lenci, Turin	DP		

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

AuRo, Milan	Innocenti, Milan
Brevetti Robbiati, Novate Milanese (Milan)	Olivetti, Ivrea
La Felsinea, Bologna	Universal, Milan

MISCELLANEOUS

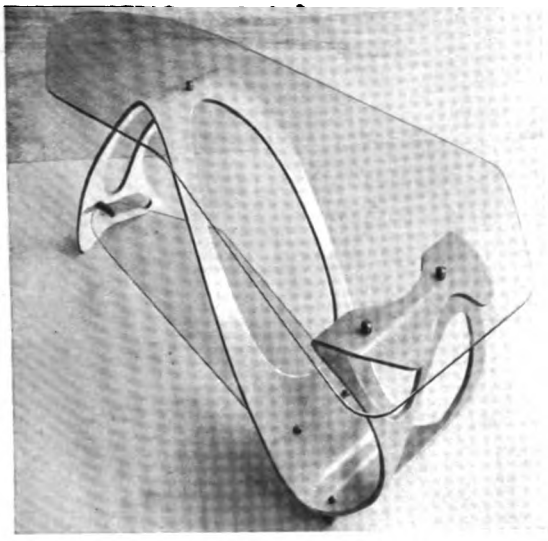
Arfango (Umberto Zanobetti), Florence	Rep	Silvia Manni, Nervi (Genoa)	DP
Antonio Comploi, Bolzano	DP	Microavorio, Genoa	DP
Gaetano Dal Monte, Faenza	DP	Alessandro Staccione, Turin	DP
		Aldo Tura, Milan	DP

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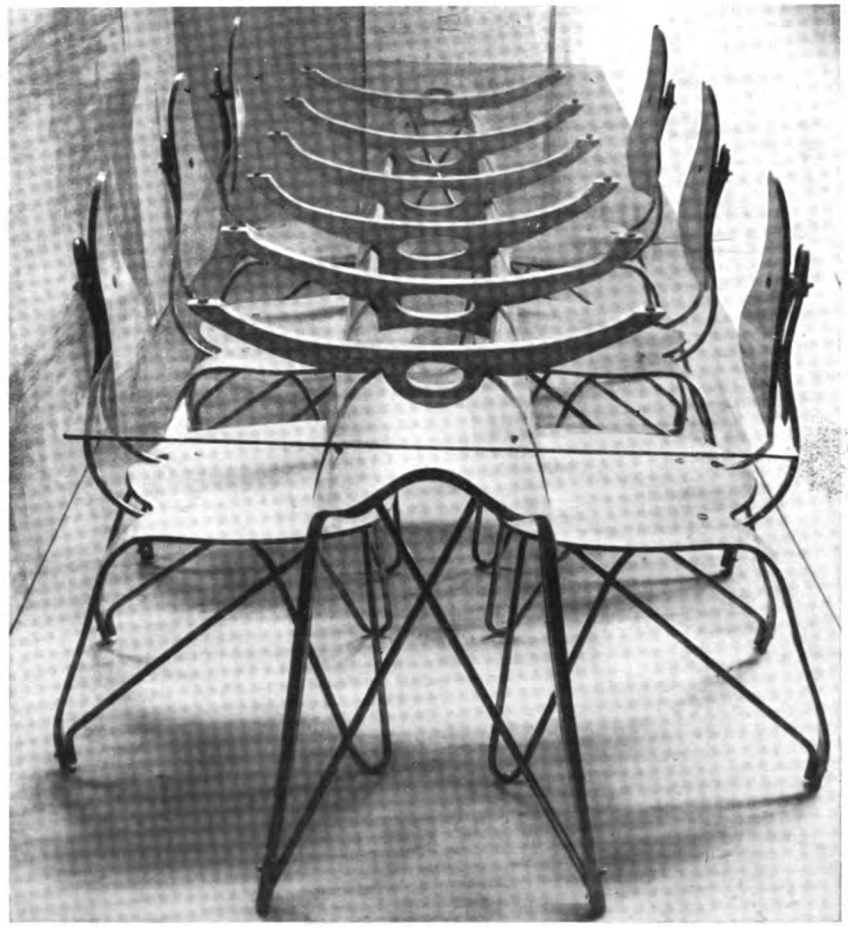
PLATES

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Tea table, plywood and glass, Mollino.



Dining table and chairs, curved maple, plywood, and glass, Mollino.

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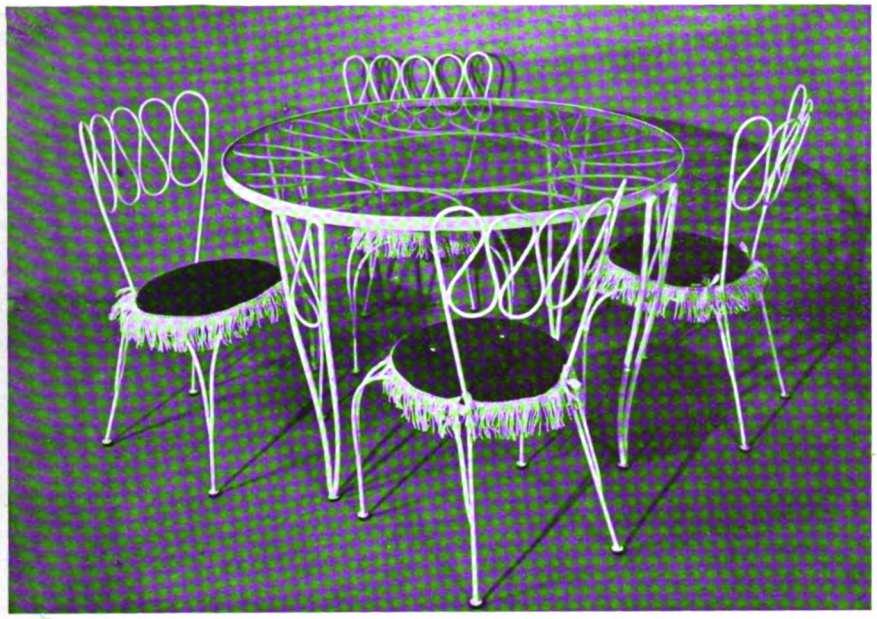


Portable serving stand, dining table with "lazy suzan", Azucena.

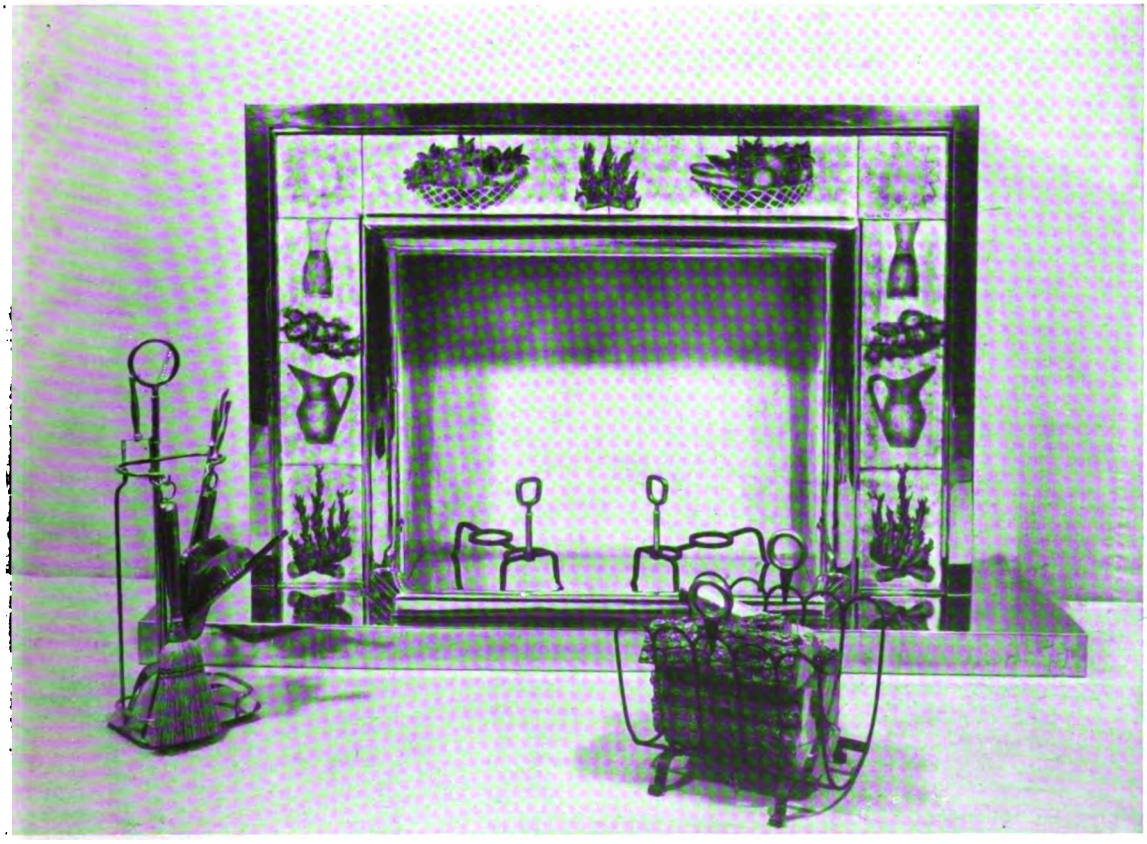


Serving table and tiered table stand, Lacca.

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Garden table and chairs, painted iron and glass, Casa e Giardino.



Fireplace, brass with plaques of polychrome enamel on copper, De Poli; accessories, brass and iron, Casa e Giardino.

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Arm chair, leather seat and back, Pecorini.



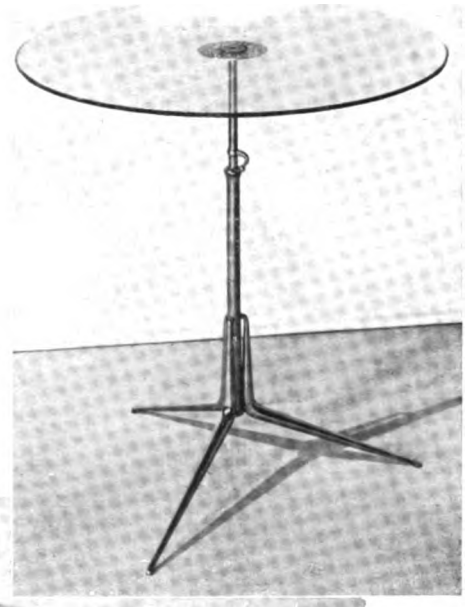
Beach chair, wicker with nylon bands, Carola.



Side chair, raffia seat and back, Pecorini.

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Serving stand, glass and brass, Arte Luce.





Three magazine racks, wood and brass and brass with hemp and leather lacing, Maffeis.

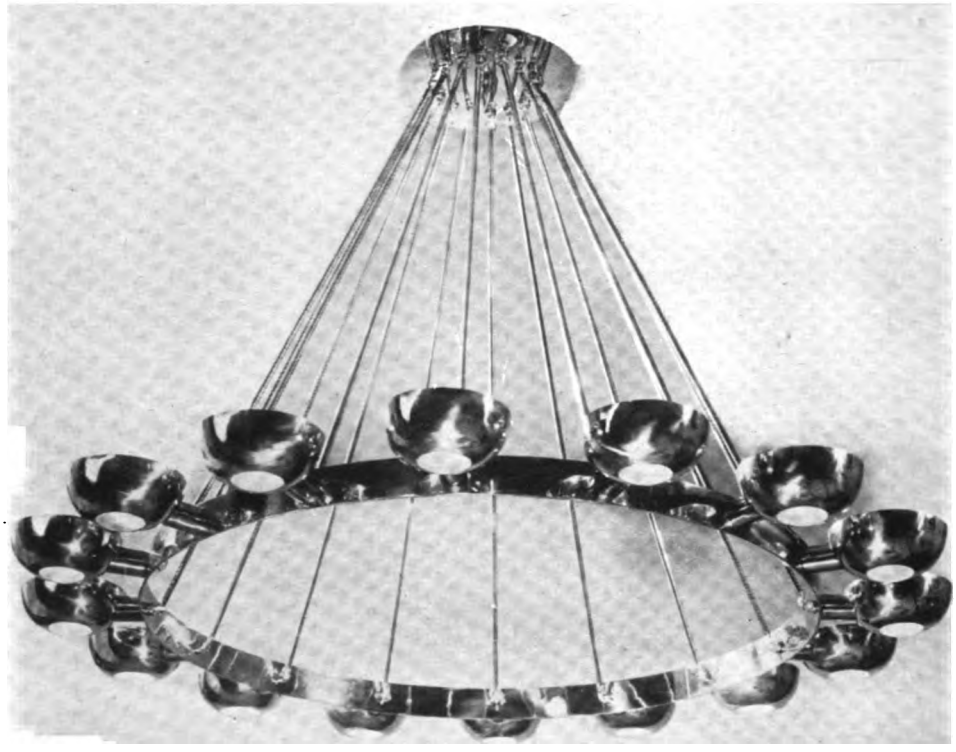


Coffee table, wood and glass, Fontana Arte.

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Electric chandelier, brass and glass, Fontana Arte.

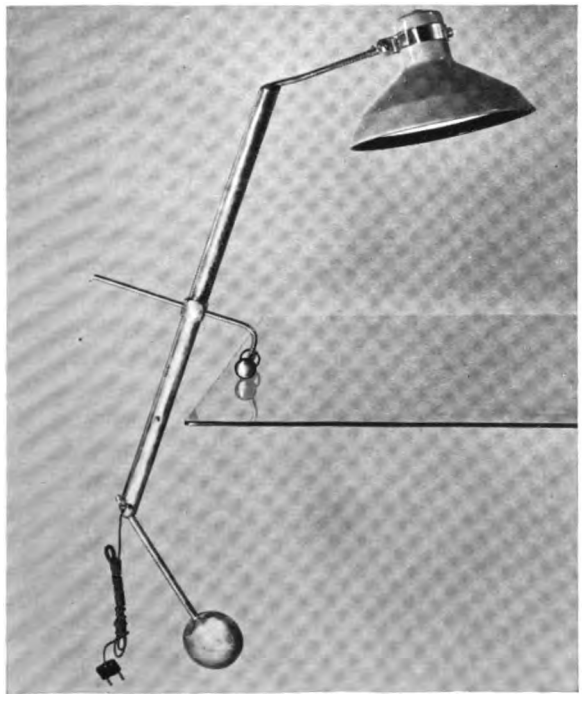


Electric chandelier, brass, Arte Luce.

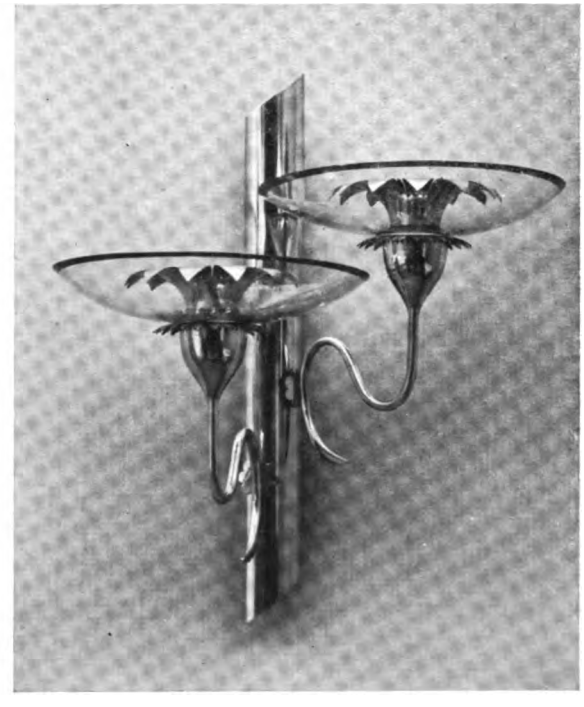
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Electric chandelier, glass and brass, Seguso.

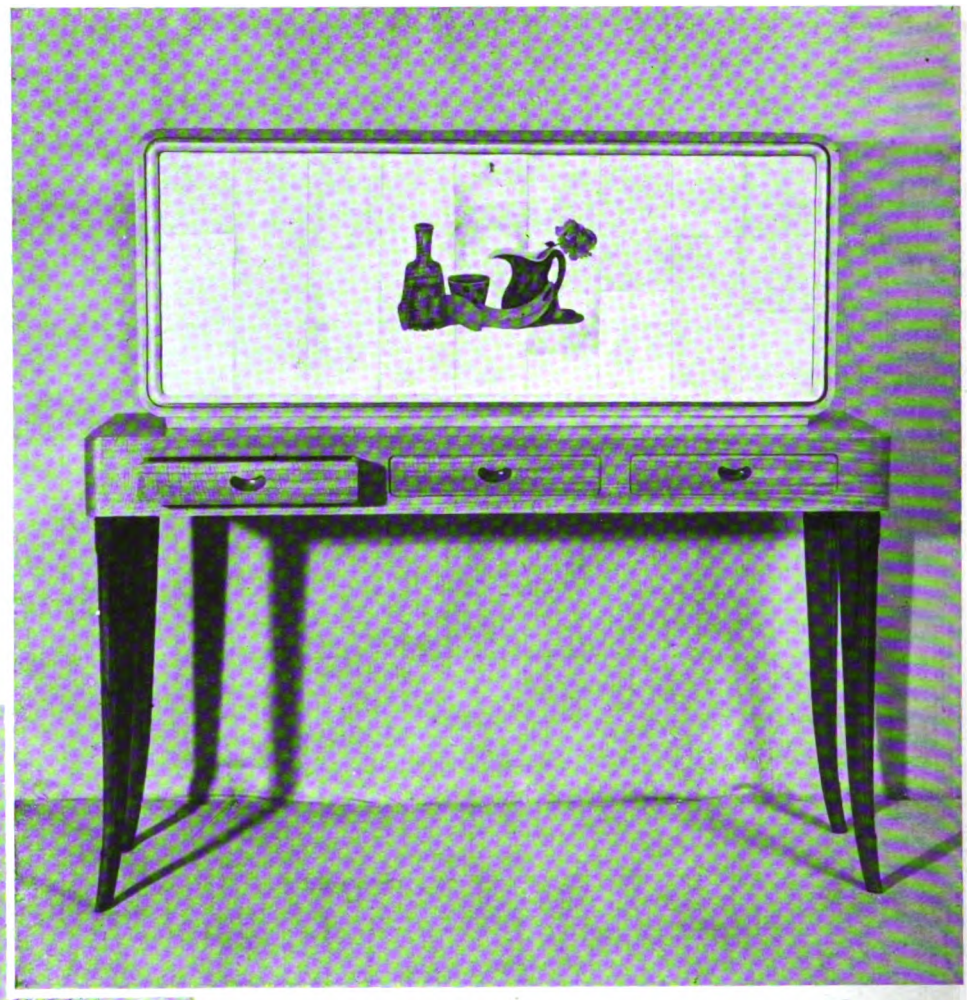


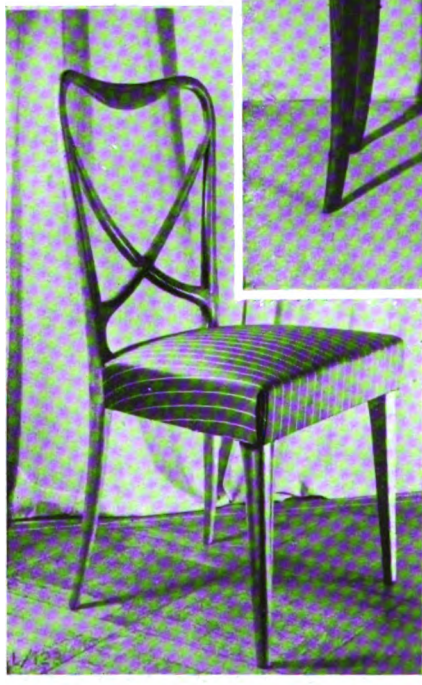
Self balancing desk lamp, Azucena.



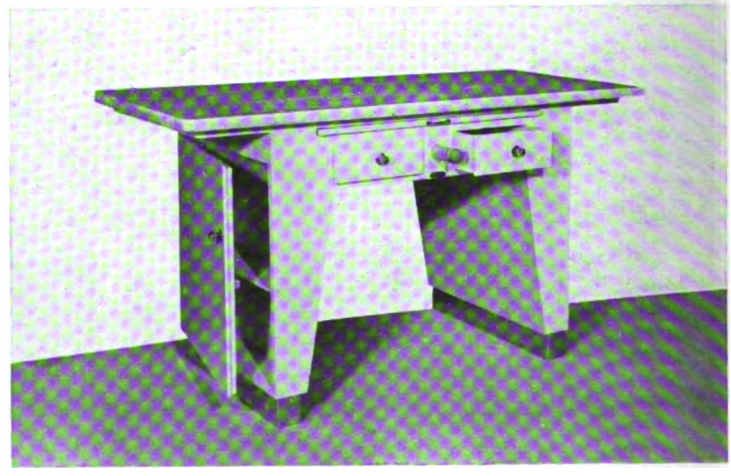
Wall sconce, brass and glass, Fontana Arte.

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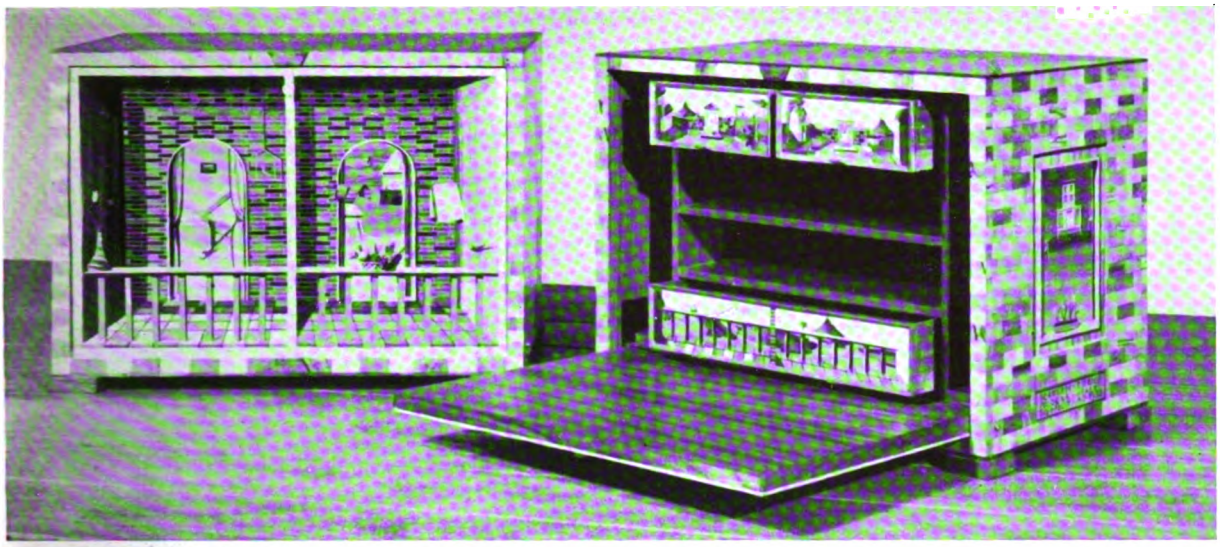


Bar, walnut with parchment covered and "intarsia" fall front Lombardi; side chair, Lombardi.

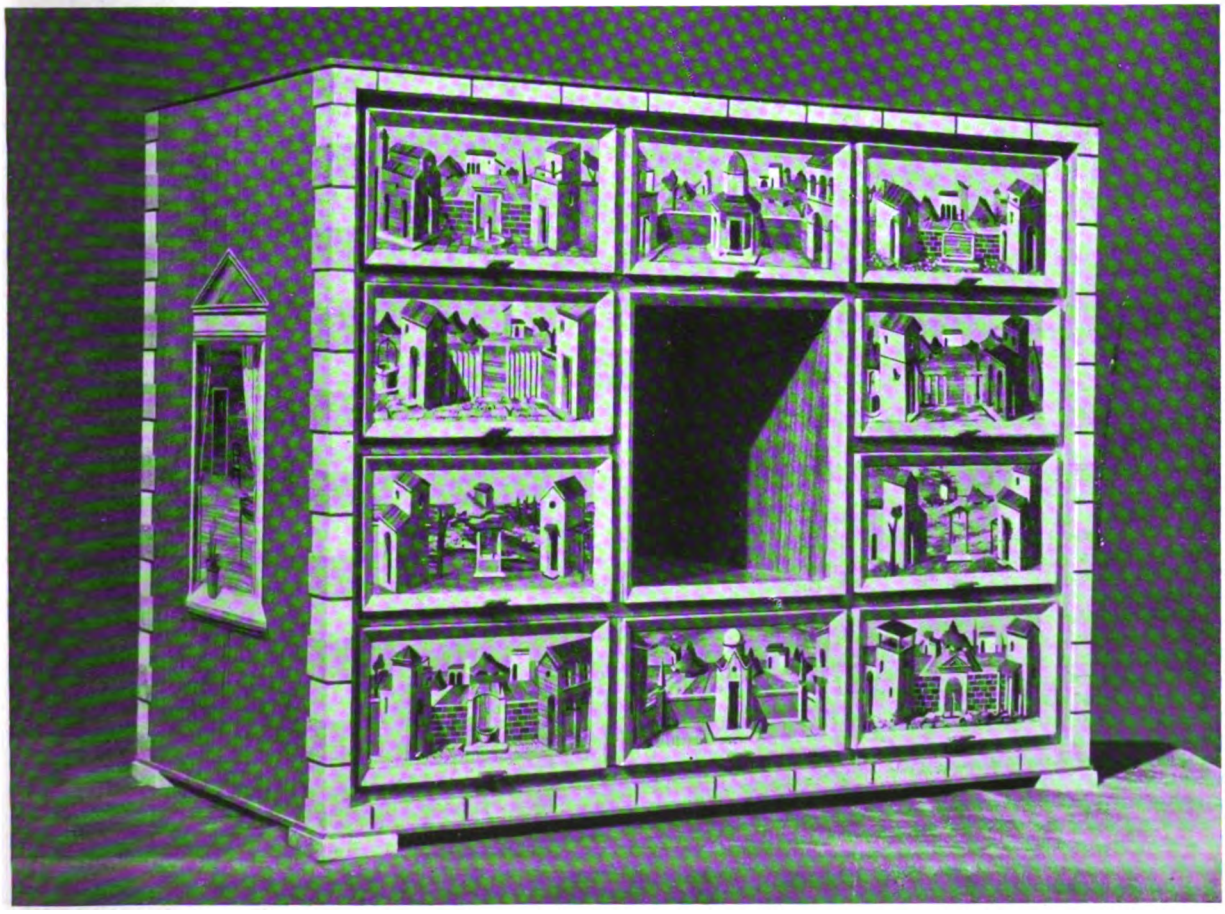


Kitchen work table, wood with marble top, Capri.

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Pair of cabinets, fall fronts with "intarsia" decoration representing "House of an Architect", Bernardi.



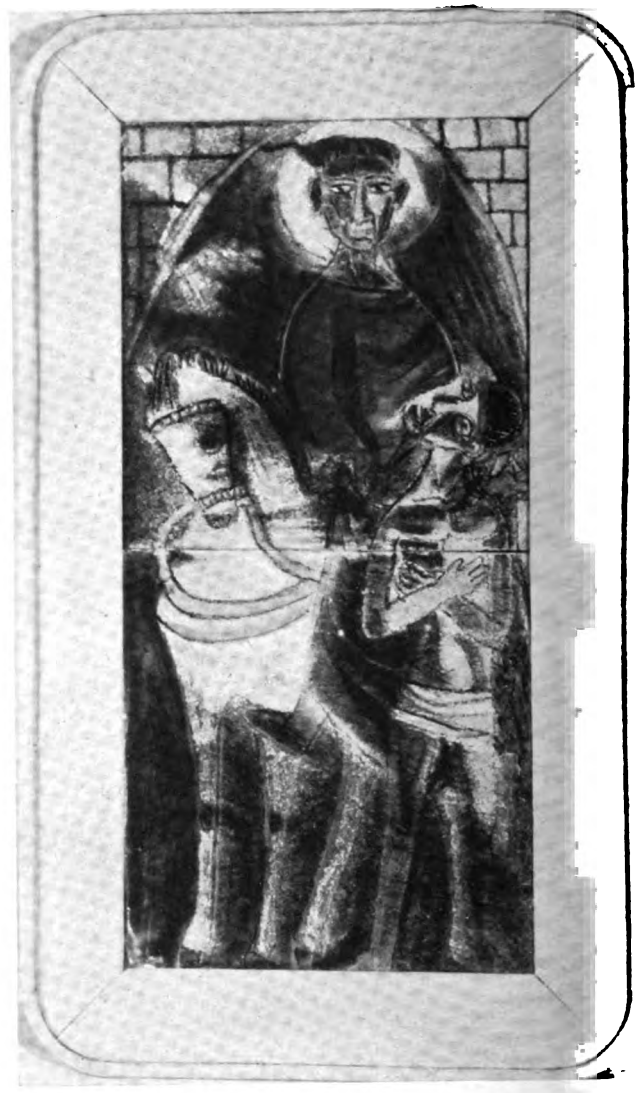
Cabinet with "intarsia" decoration, Bernardi.

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Jug in form of pelican; "Madonna and Child", plate; polychrome faience, Gambone.





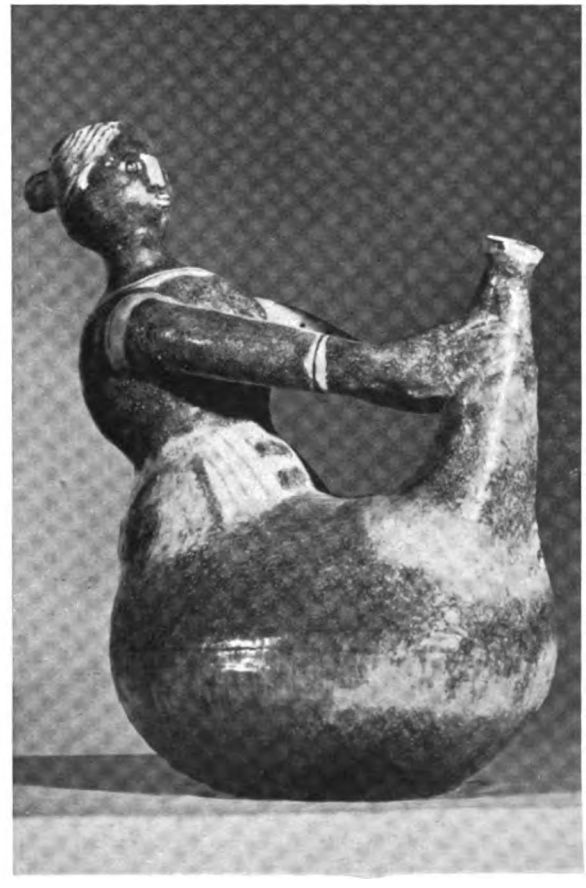


"St. Martin and the Beggar", tiles in polychrome faience, Gambone.

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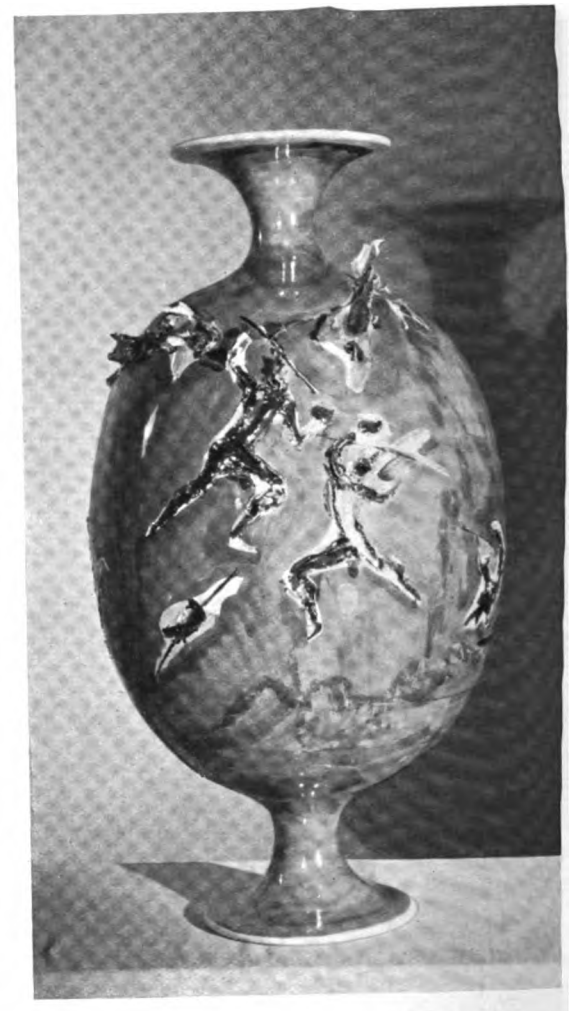


"Madonna and Child", jug in polychrome faience, Gambone.

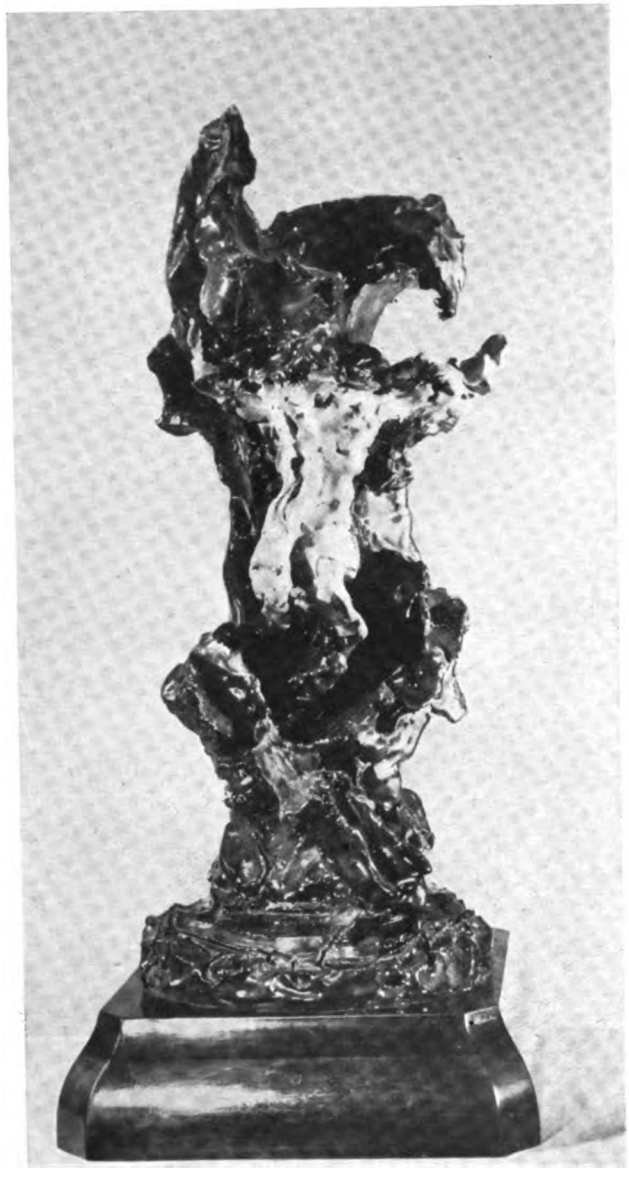


Water jug, polychrome faience, Gambone.

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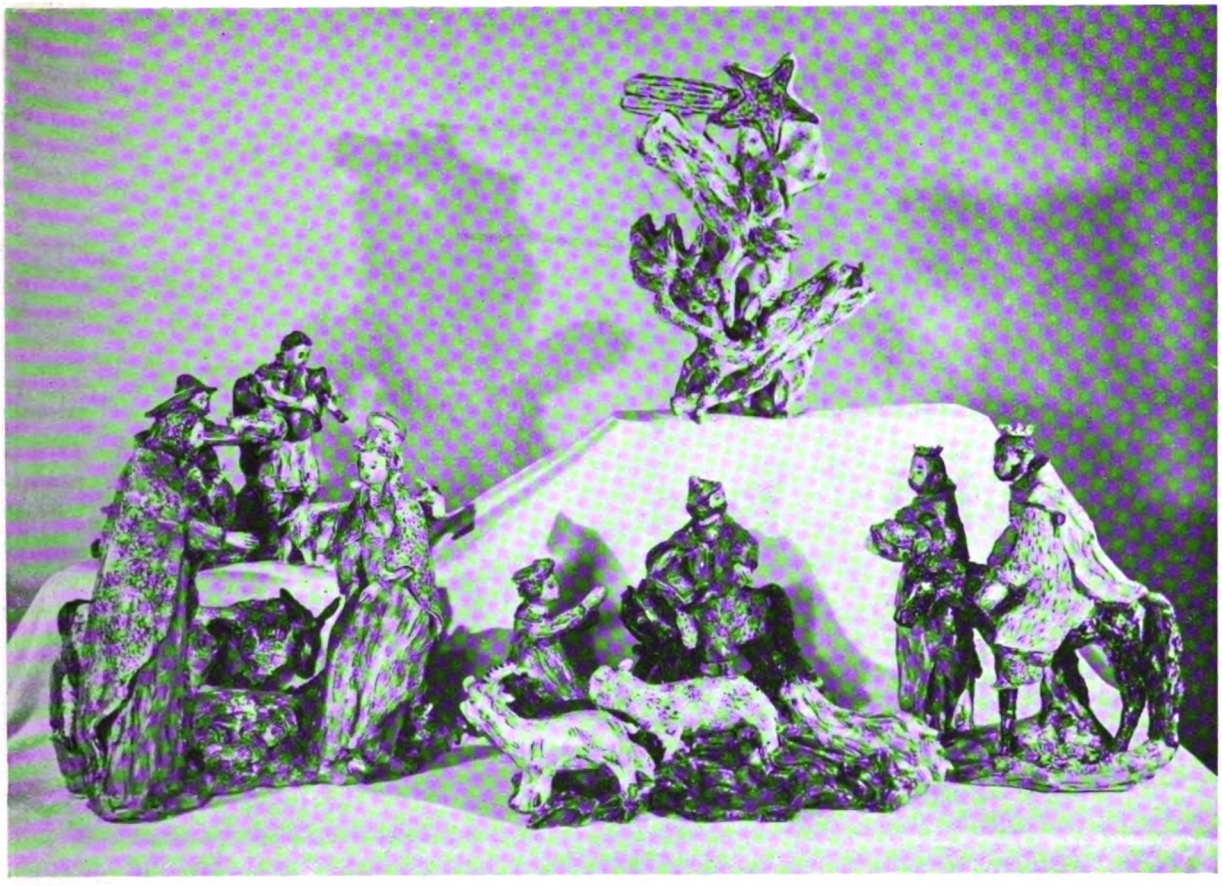


Vase (one of pair), polychrome faience with luster, Fontana.



"Transfiguration", polychrome faience with luster, Fontana.

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Groups from a *Presepio* in polychrome faience, Fancello.



Dish of fruit and amorini, table decoration in polychrome faience, Broggini.

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"The Typist", polychrome faience, Leoncillo.

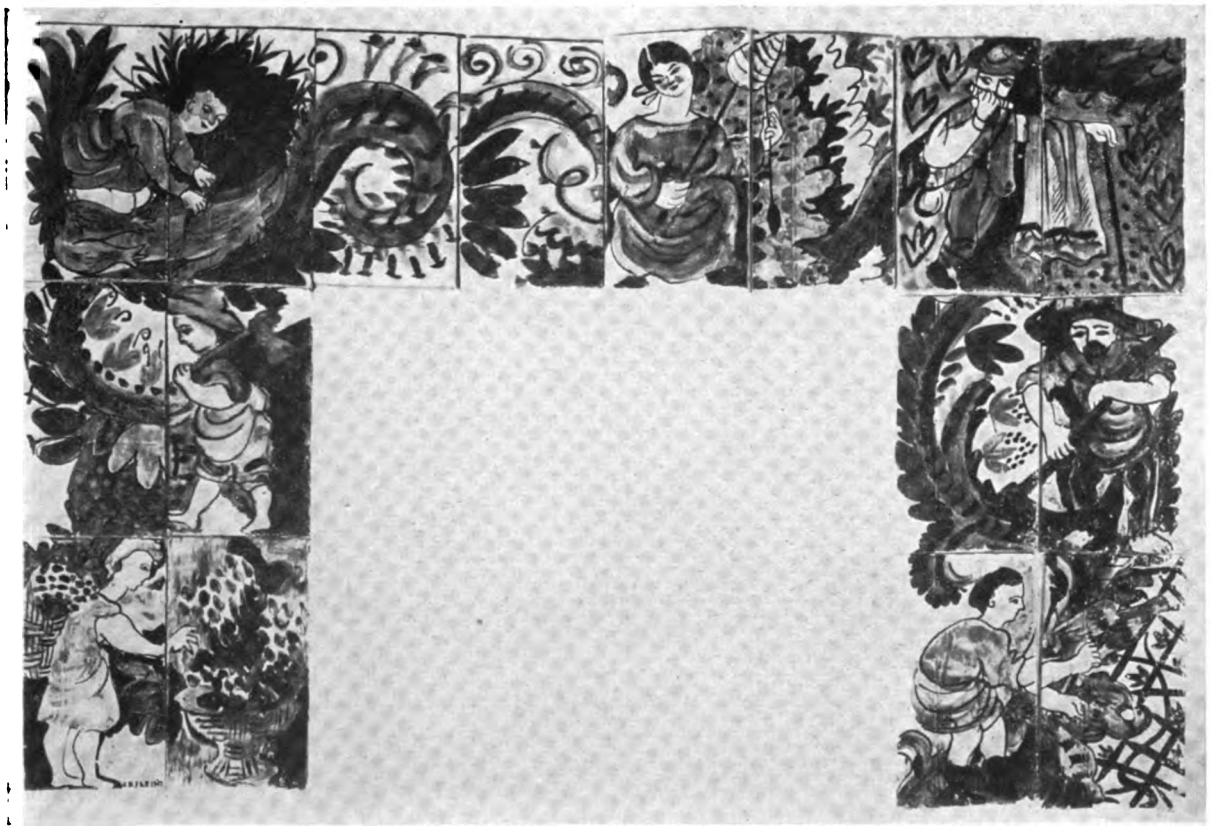
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"Pigeon", flower container, polychrome faience, Cascella.



"Children's Game", abstraction, polychrome faience, Cascella.



Tiles for a fireplace, polychrome faience, Cesarini Cascella.

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"Annunciation", polychrome faience, Melotti.

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" Pietà " (detail), polychrome faience, Fantoni.

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"Death of a Partisan", plaque, polychrome faience, Fabbri.



"Wounded Horse", polychrome faience, Fabbri.

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"Frightened Horses", tile in polychrome faience, "The Cyclist", head in polychrome faience, Sassù.

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" Putti ", plaque; " Rearing Horse "; " Four Sardinian Women ", candle holders; polychrome faience, Cerrato.



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"Annunciation", plaque, polychrome faience with luster, Lucerni.



"Episodes from the Life of Christ", mosaic with relief, polychrome faience, Macedonio.

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Dish of Fruit, centerpiece in polychrome faience, Campi.



Plates, polychrome faience, Spilimbergo (birds) and De Salvo.

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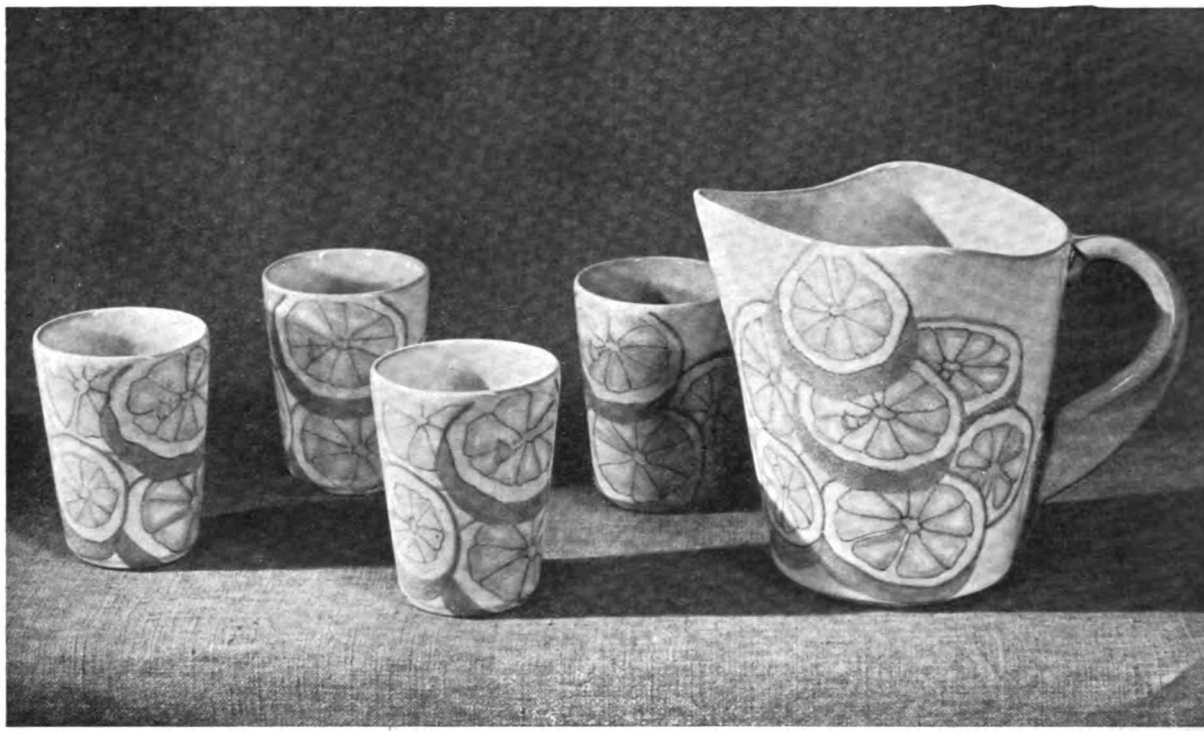


Head of an armored horse, white faience, Zaccagnini.



Service Plates, polychrome faience, designed by Cipriani, executed by Zaccagnini.

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Pitcher and beakers in polychrome faience, Ernestine–D'Agostino.



Group of porcelains – tea set, plates, and vase, Richard–Ginori.

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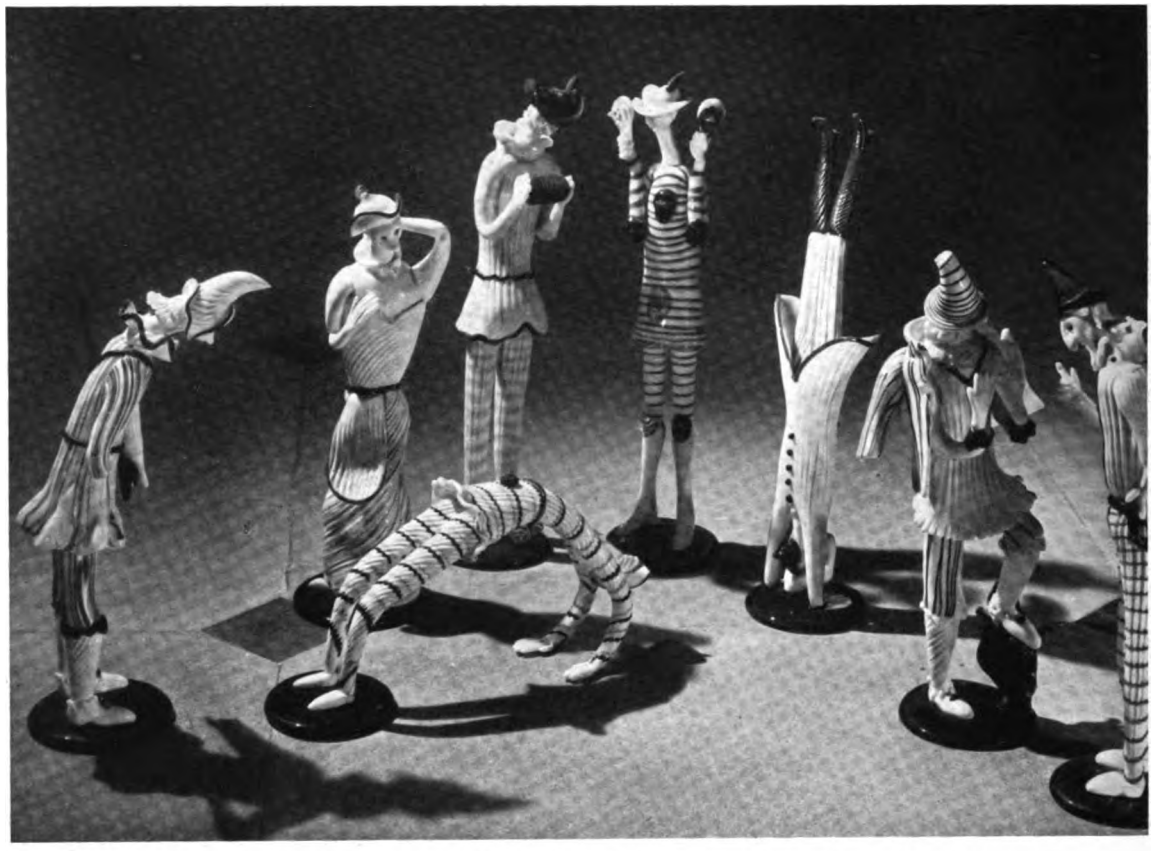


Dinner set (part), polychrome faience, Arte Artigianato Orobico, designed by Normanni.



Dinner set (part), polycrome faience, Arte Industria Vicentina, designed by De Maria.

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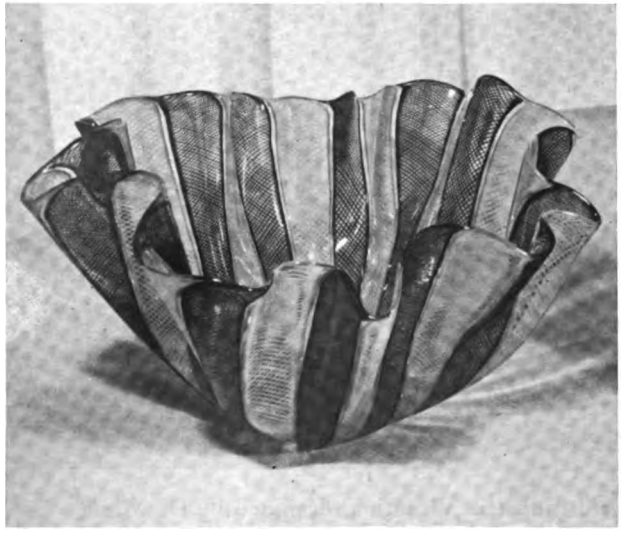


Figurines – *Saltimbanchi*, blown and molded polychrome glass, Venini.

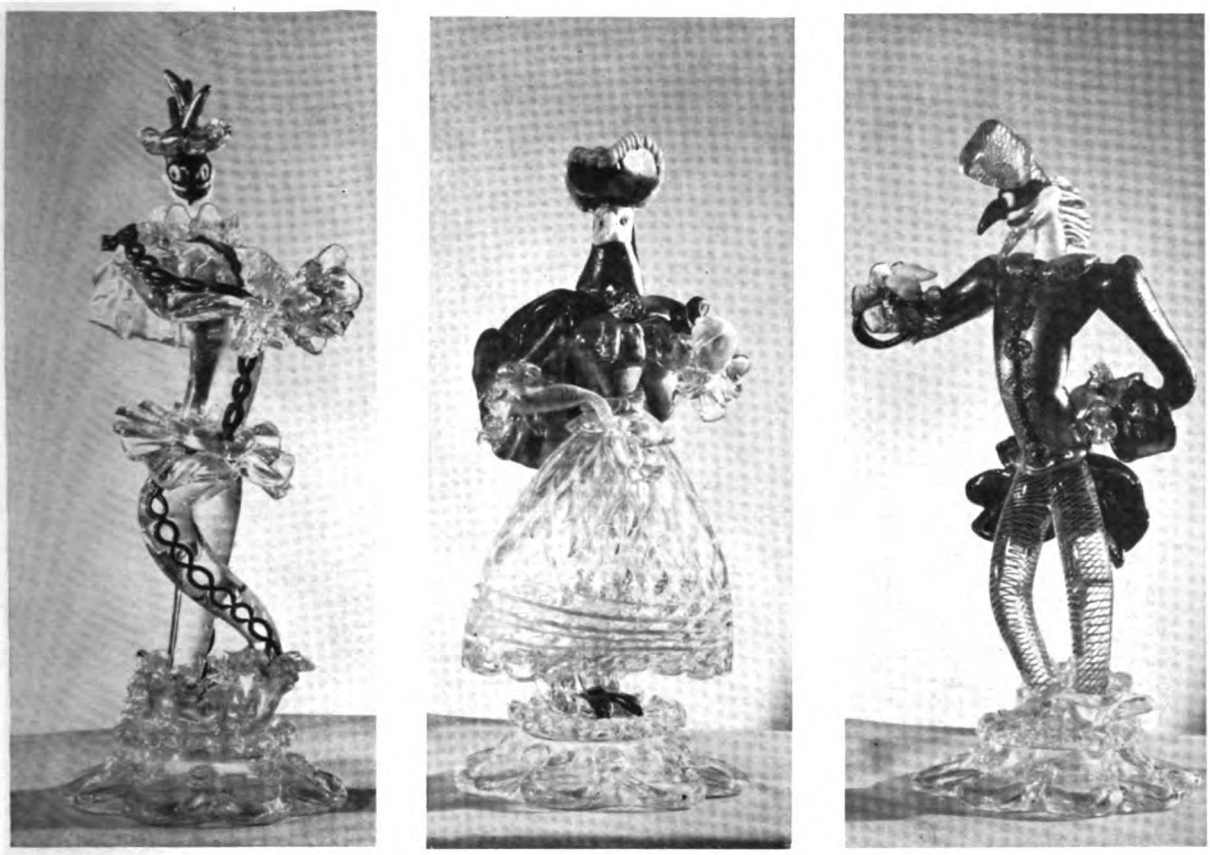
Figurines – Sardinian couple, blown and molded polychrome glass, Venini.



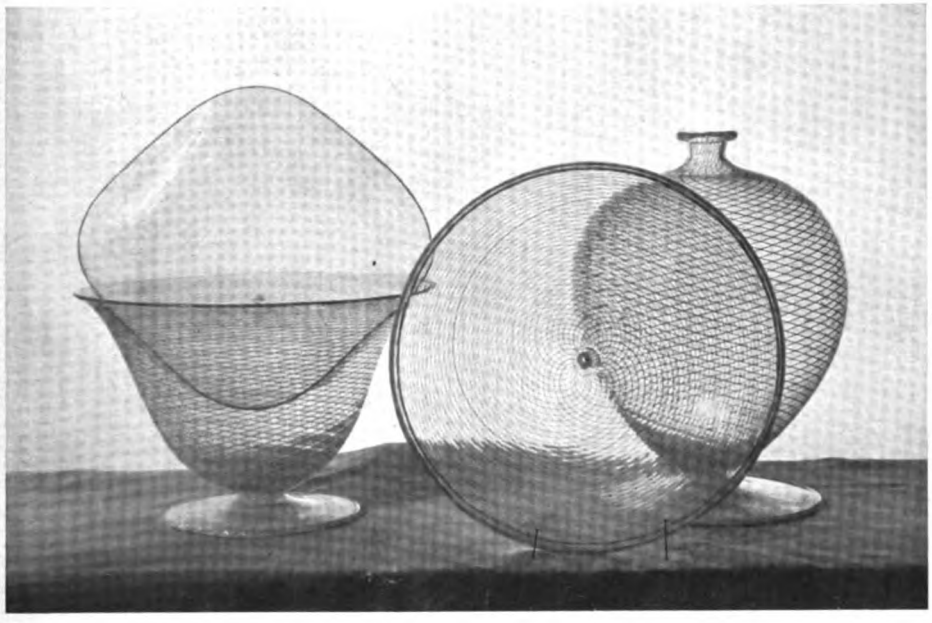
Bowl in colored *latticino* glass, Venini.



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Figurines – *Commedia dell'Arte*, blown and molded polychrome glass, Seguso.



Bowls, vase, and plate, *latticino* glass, Seguso.

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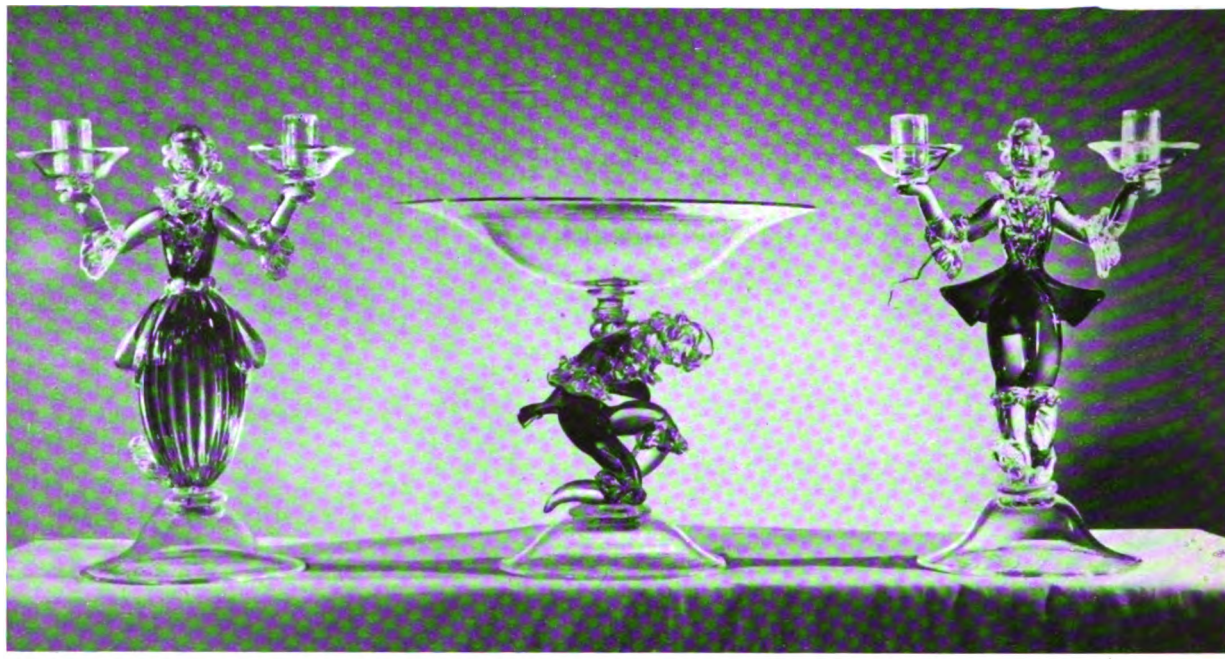
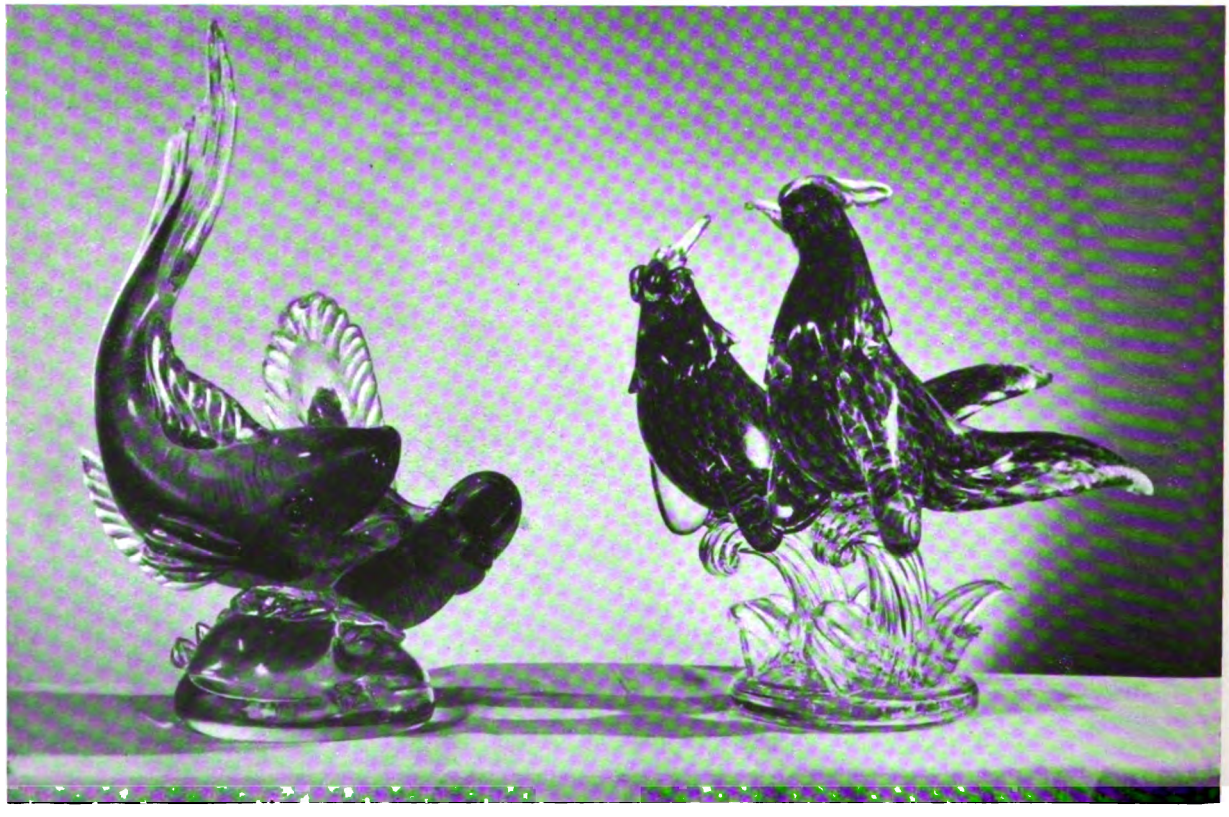


Table decoration – figured candlesticks and centerpiece, blown and molded glass, Barbini.

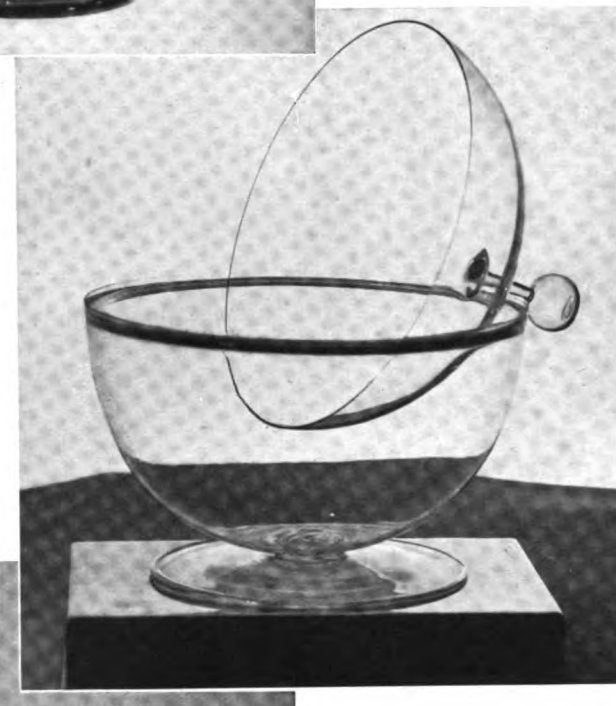


Two groups – fish and pheasants, colored glass with clear overlay, Barbini.

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Bottle and footed bowl, blown and molded green Empoli glass, Taddei.



Covered bowl, blown glass, Seguso.

Fruit compote set (part), blown "smoke" glass, Nason & Moretti.



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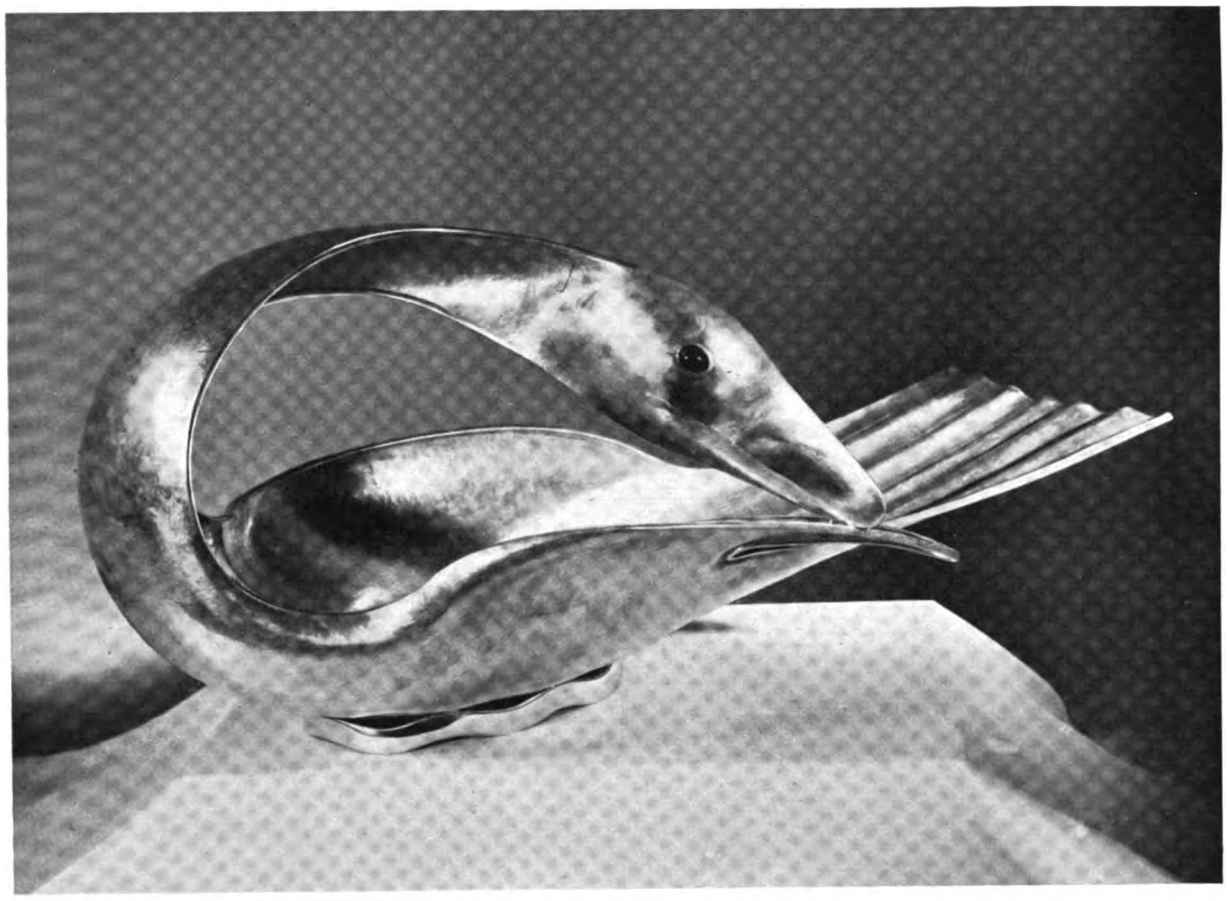
Vase and photograph frame, molded glass, Fontana Arte.



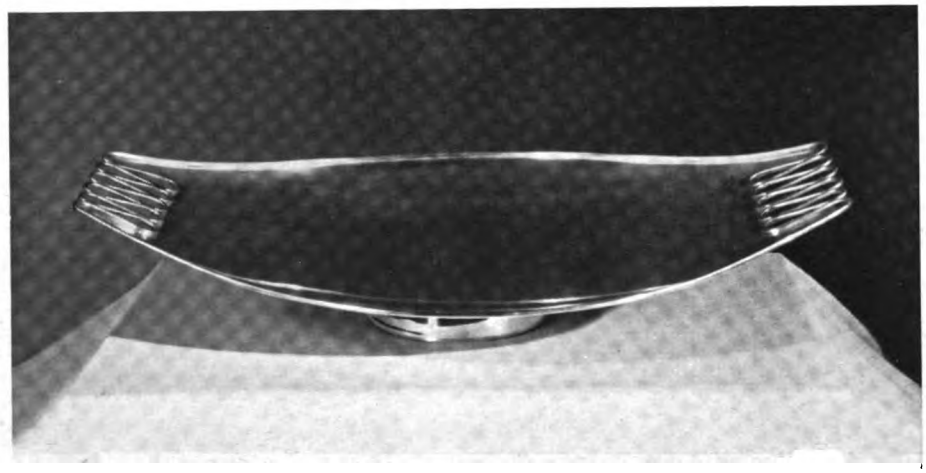


Two lamp bases, blown and molded green glass bells with figurines in cloth and straw, Ennebi.

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" Swan ", centerpiece, silver, Finzi.



Dish, silver, Finzi.

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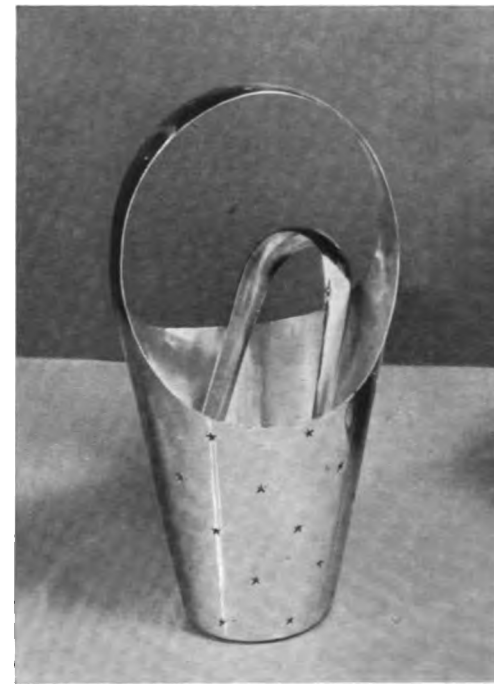
Lamp, candlestick, beaker, and bells, brass, Lacca.



Jug, brass with wood handle, Lacca.



ase and jug, brass and brass and wood, Lacca.



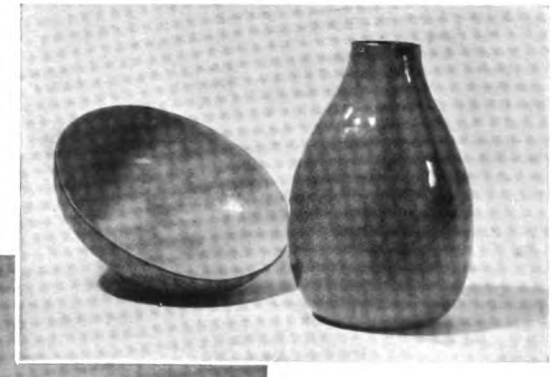
Ice bucket and tongs, brass, Dona.

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Vases in copper, bowl in pewter, Ferrari.

Bowl and vase; two birds; polychrome enamel on copper, De Poli.



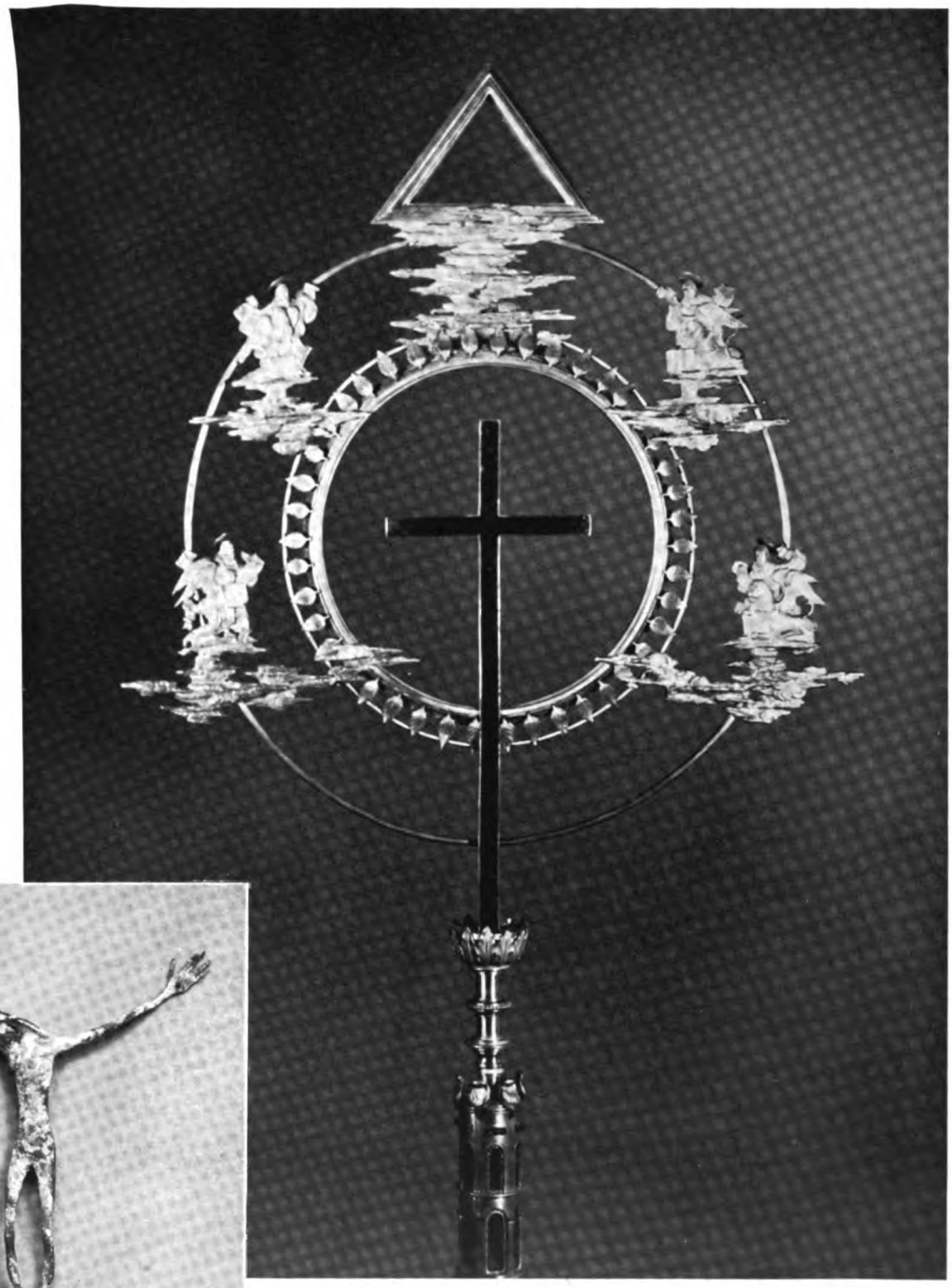


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"The Crucifixion, with Scenes from the Old Testament and from the Life of Christ", polychrome enamel on copper, Martinotti.

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Altar Cross (detail), silver, silver-gilt, and lapis lazuli, Galassi.



"Crucifixion", wrought iron, Russo.

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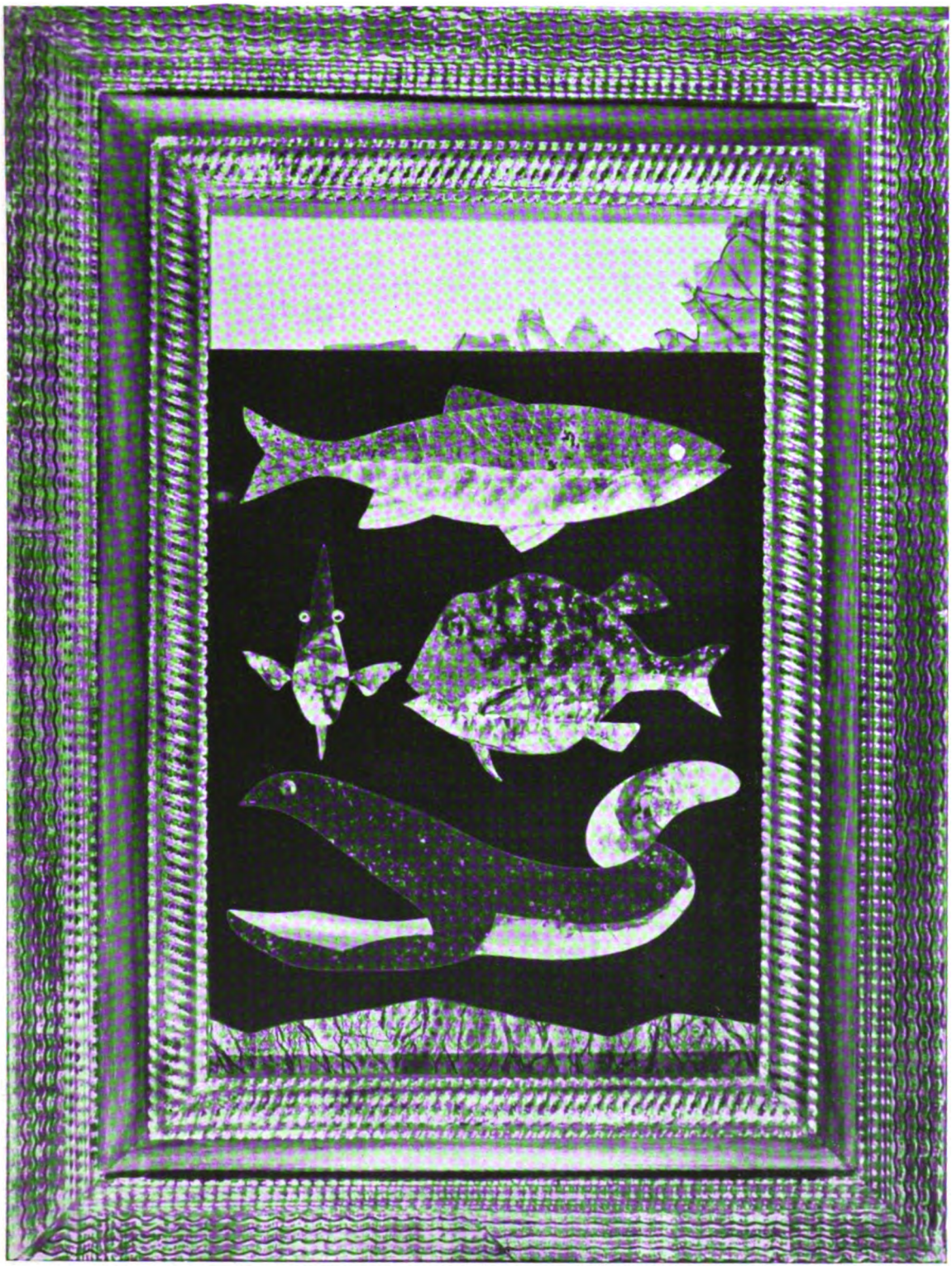


Obelisks, boxes, and pictorial plaques, *pietra dura*, Blow.



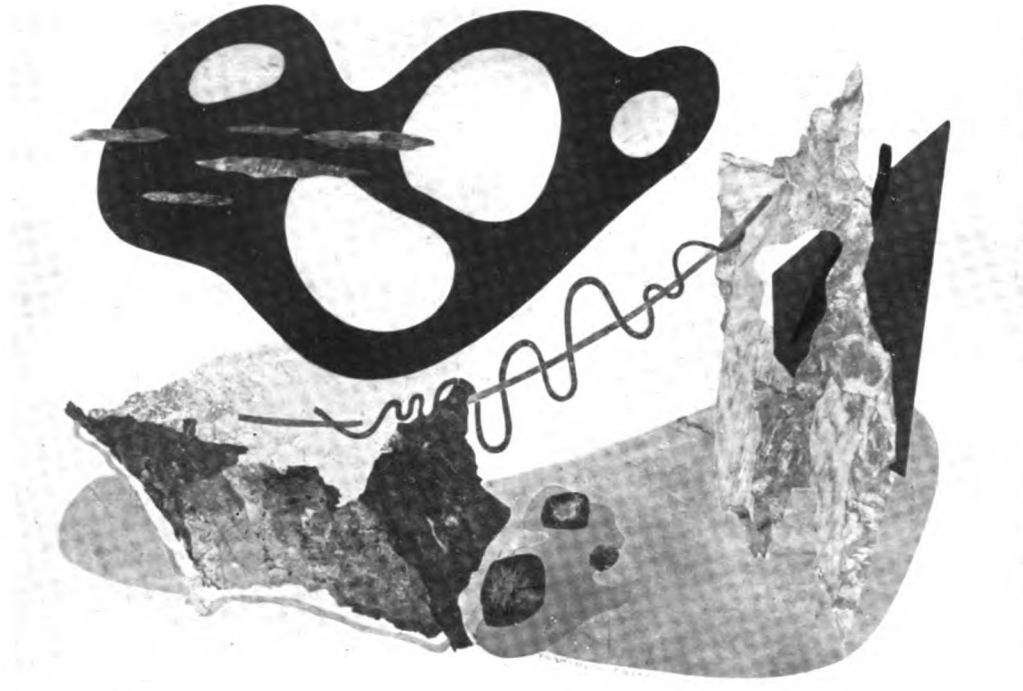
Chalices and bowls, marble and paesina, Galassi.

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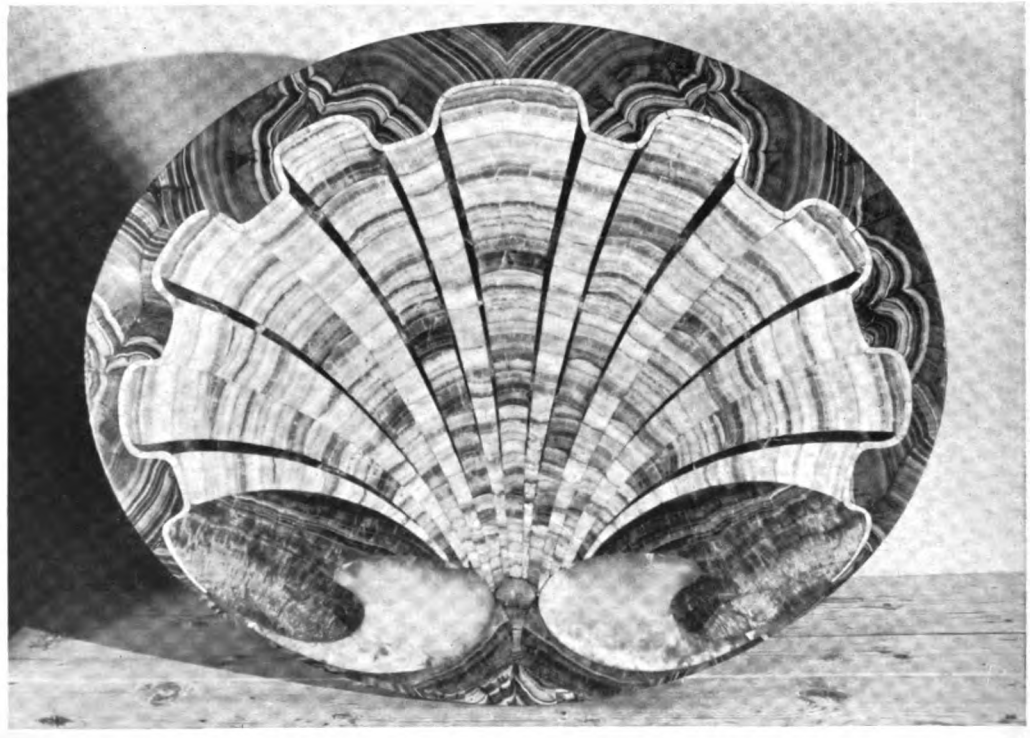


Composition of fish, pictorial plaque, *pietra dura*, Blow.

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Abstraction, table top, *pietra dura*, Prampolini.



"Shell", table top, *pietra dura*, Menegatti.

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Two heads, fragment, mosaic, Goffredo and Renato Gregorini.



Composition with bird, mosaic, Annamaria Cesarini Cascella.

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"Indiana", costume jewelry set, metal and paste, Luciana (posed by the designer).

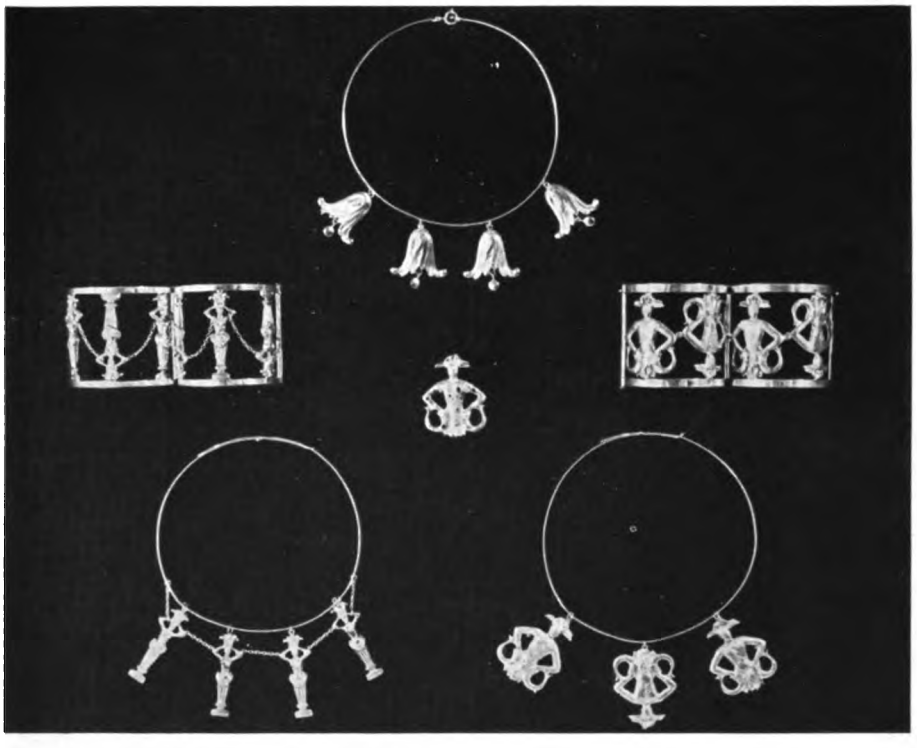


Costume jewelry, shells, sequins, beads, and coral fragments on silk and velvet, Ivancich.

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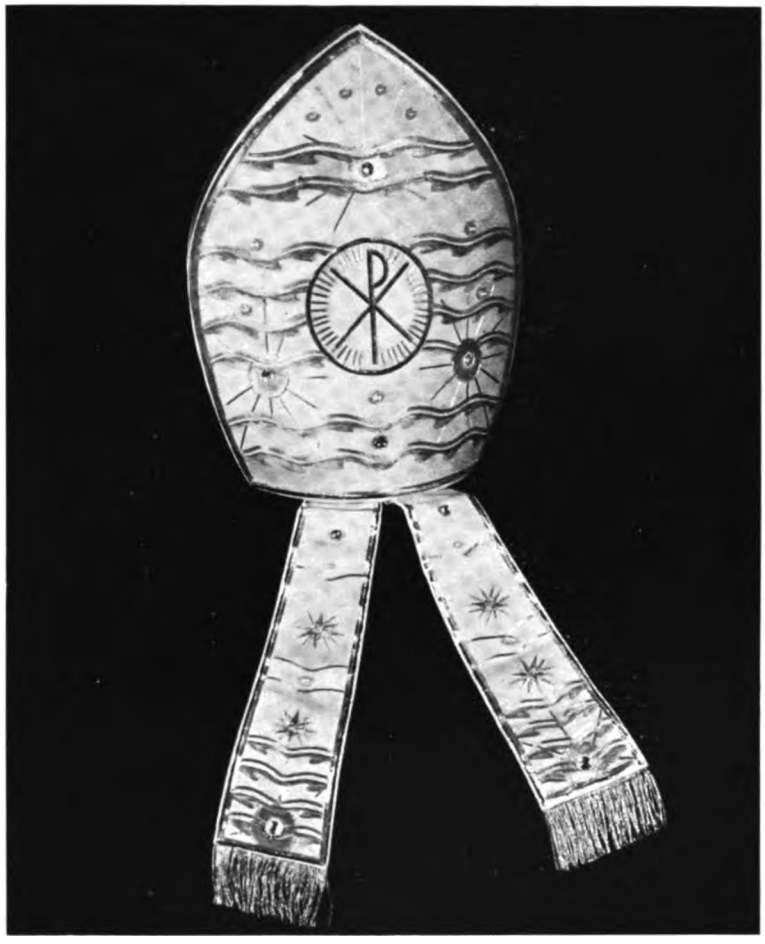


Costume jewelry, polychrome ceramic, Barbasetti.



Costume jewelry, silver and silver-gilt, Carocci.

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Bishop's Mitre, ivory silk embroidered in green and gold with paste jeweling, Assirelli.



Fabrics for ecclesiastical vestments, cut velvet and brocade, Bevilacqua.

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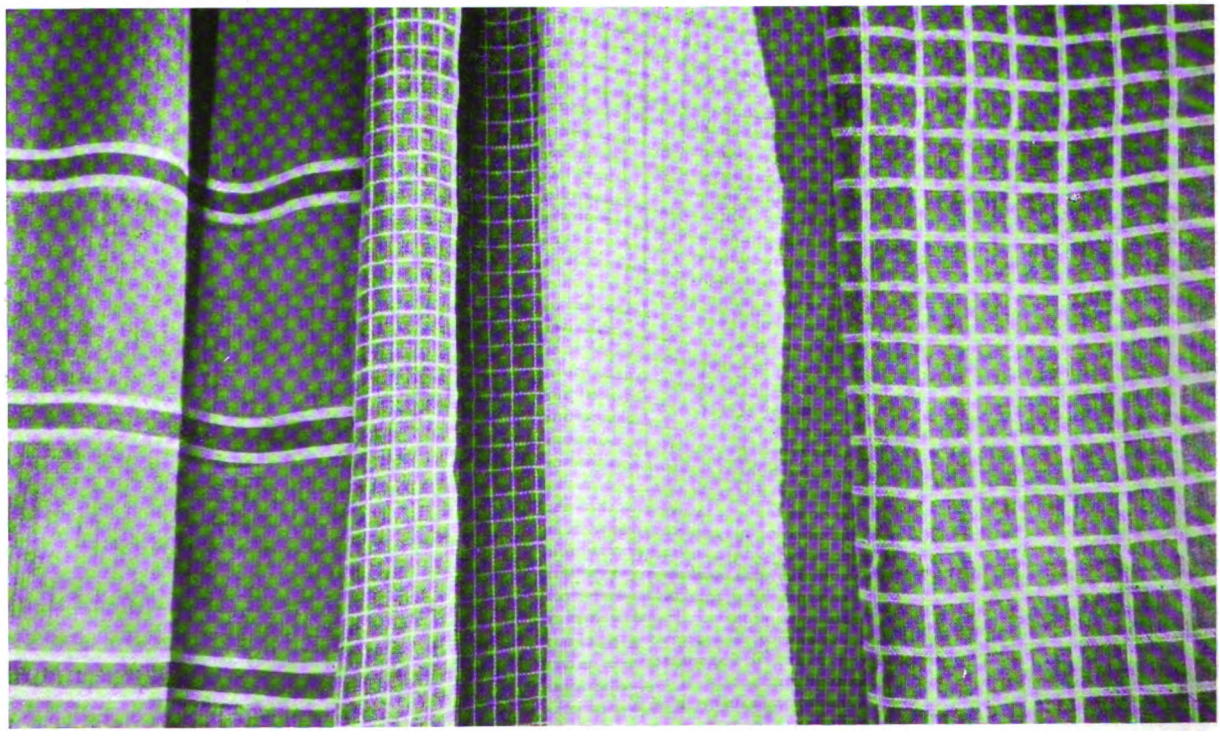


Drapery fabrics, printed linen and glazed chintz, Myricae.

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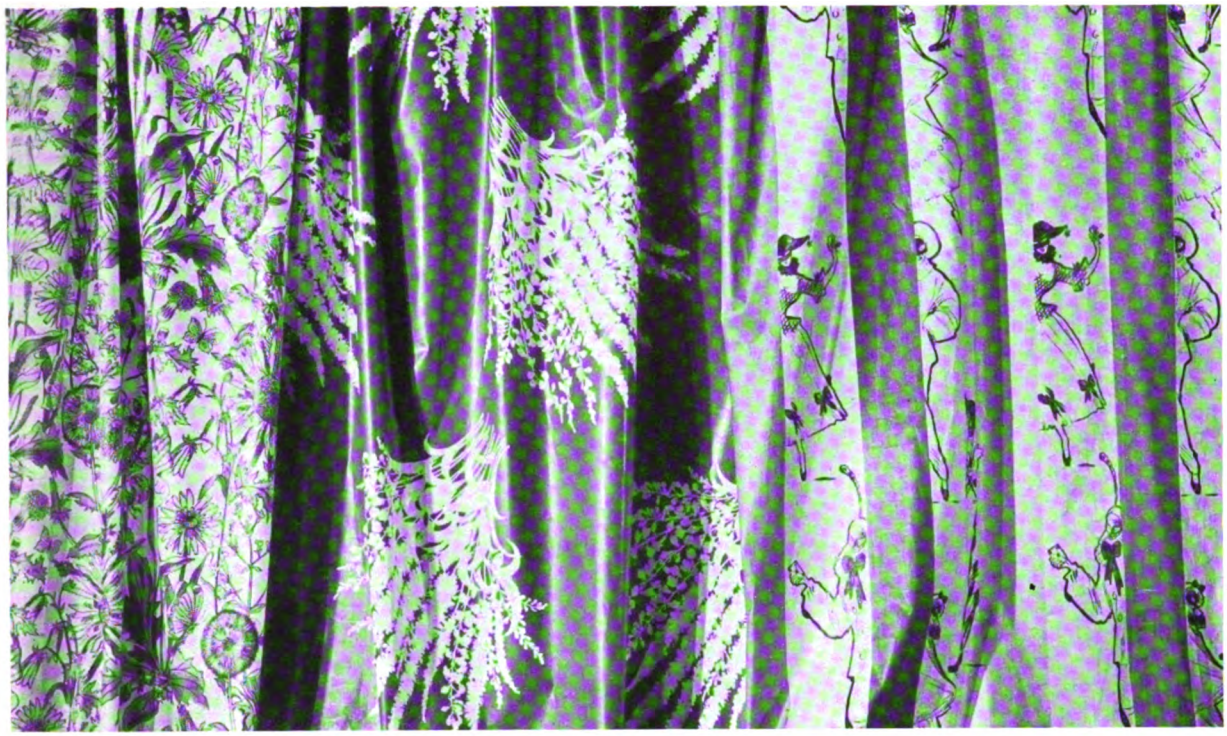


Drapery fabrics, printed hemp, Linificio & Canapificio Nazionale.



Hemp curtaining, Linificio & Canapificio Nazionale.

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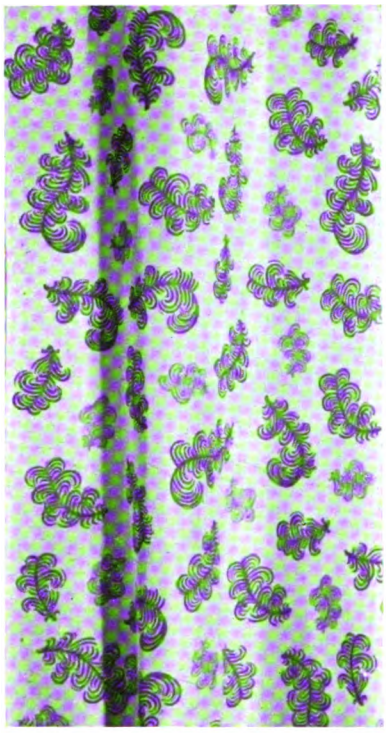


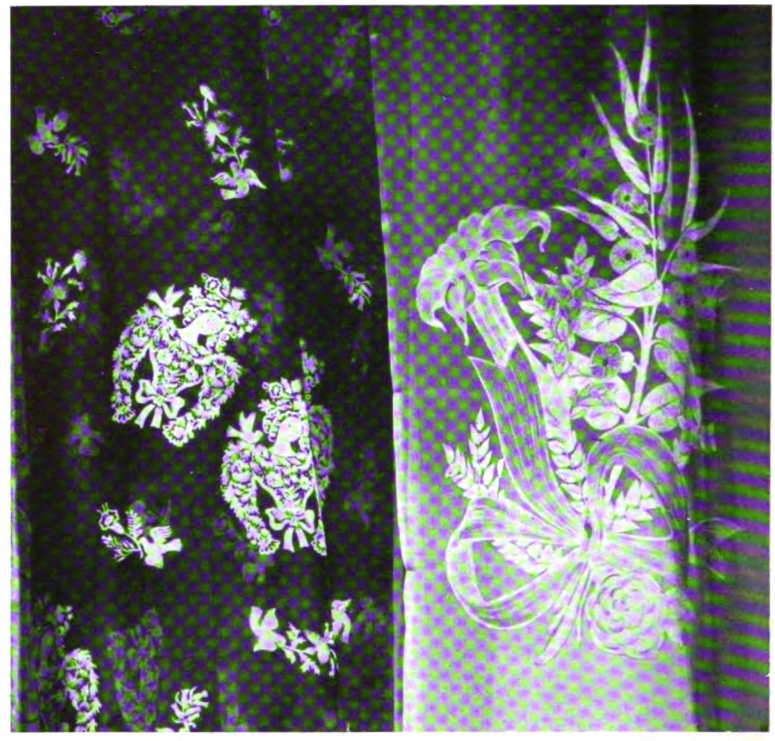
Drapery fabrics, glazed chintz, Fede Cheti.



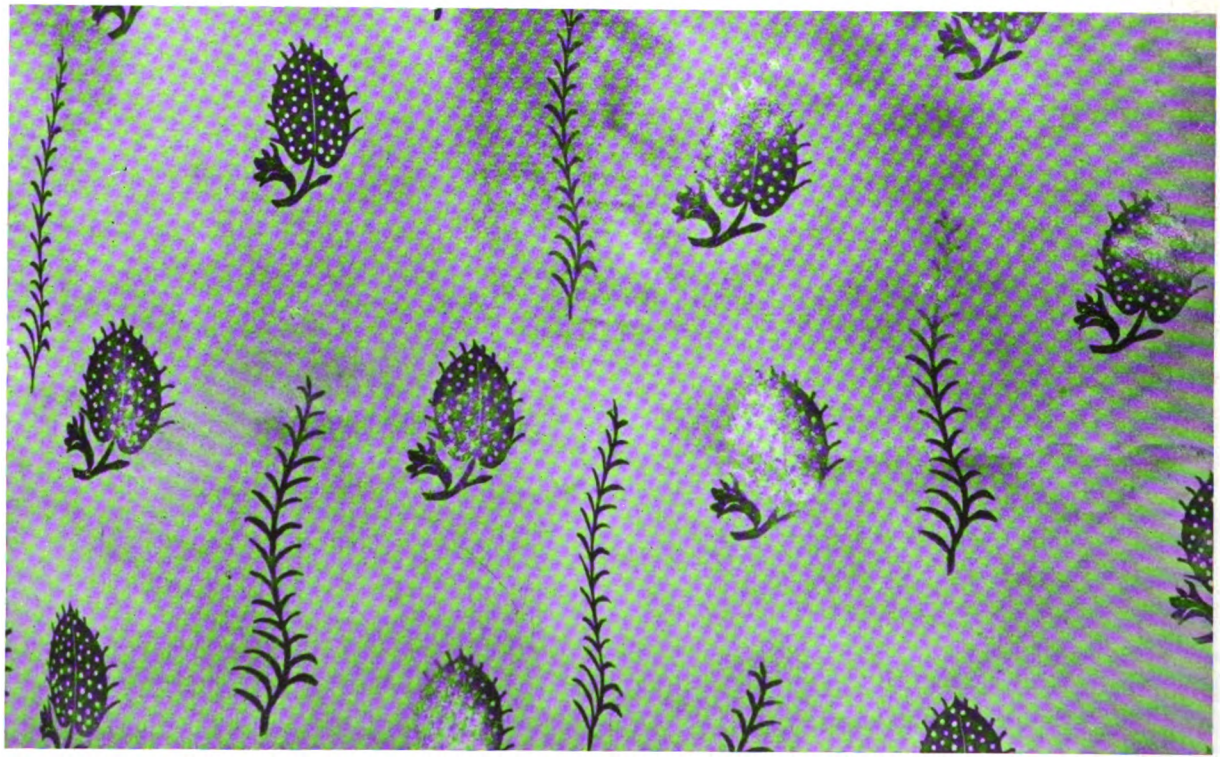
Drapery fabrics, printed hemp, MITA.

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Satin fabric; silk gauzes; printed in polychrome, Myricae.



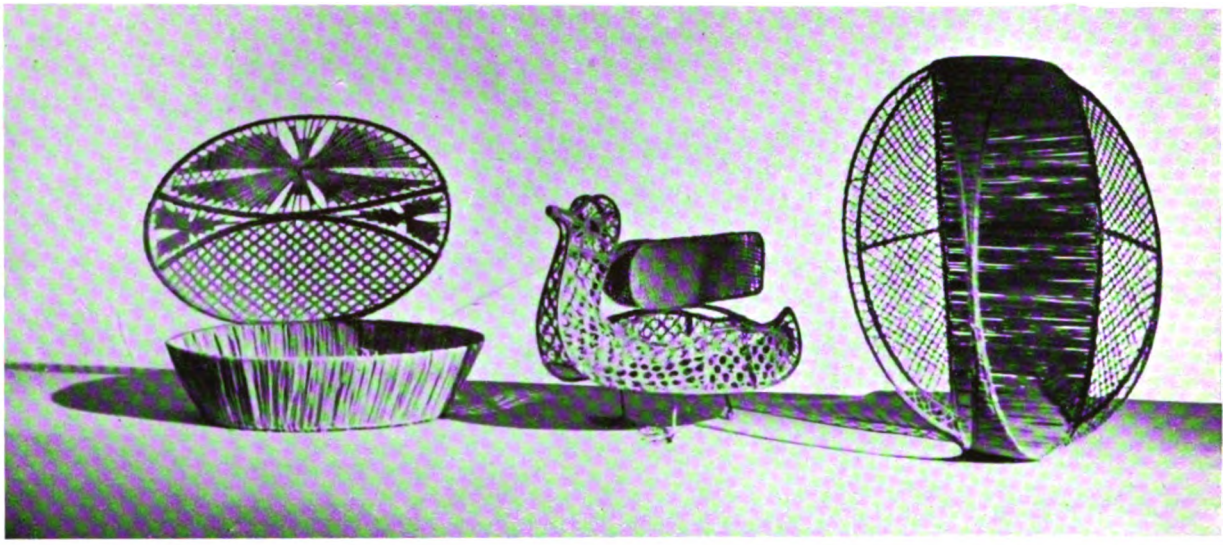
Satin fabric, printed in gray and gold, Myricae.

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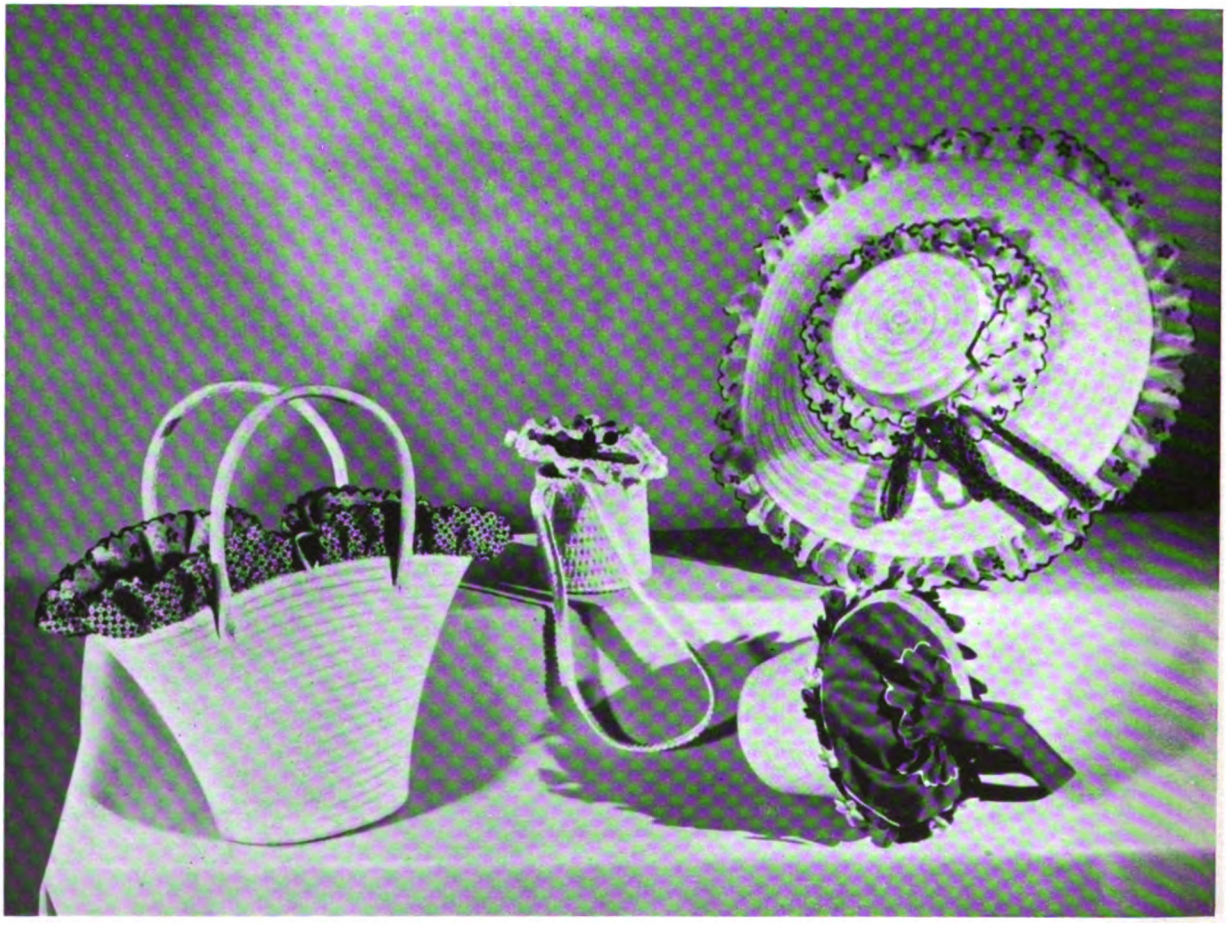


Skirt, black cotton printed in green and gold, Kowa'iska;
Rug (from the Marches), wool, dark gray on white ground, Myricae.

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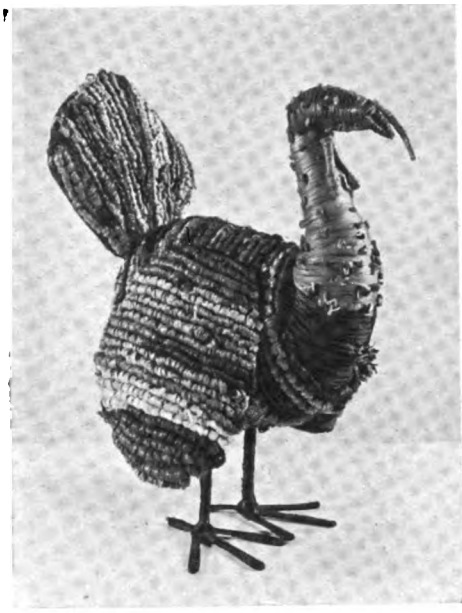


Group of baskets, straw lace (Naples), Migliaccio.



Hat and bags, polychrome straw and cotton, Paoli.

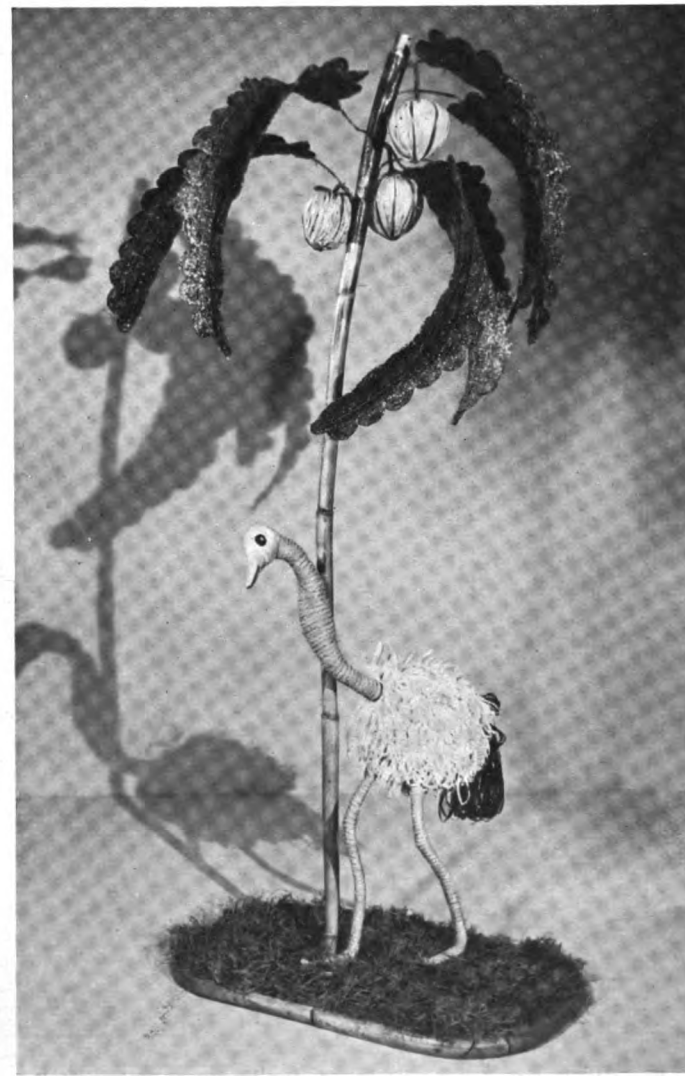
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Turkey, polychrome straw, Bettini.



Goat and donkey, straw toys, Paoli.

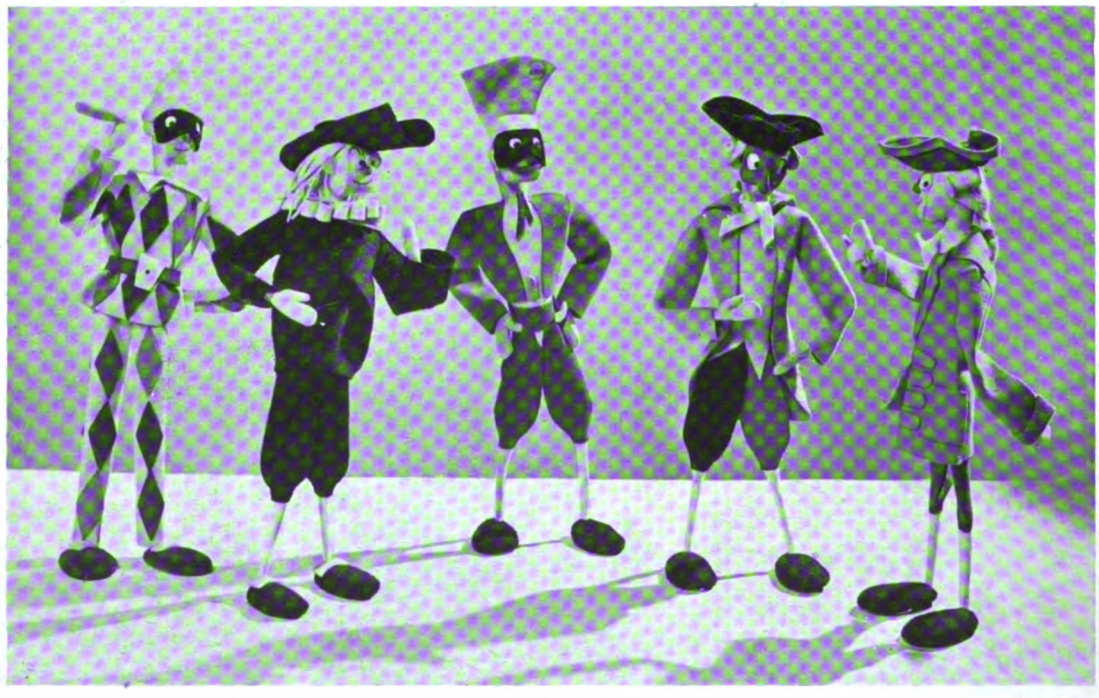


Palm tree and ostrich, polychrome straw, Paoli.

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Group of toys, polychrome felt, Navarra.

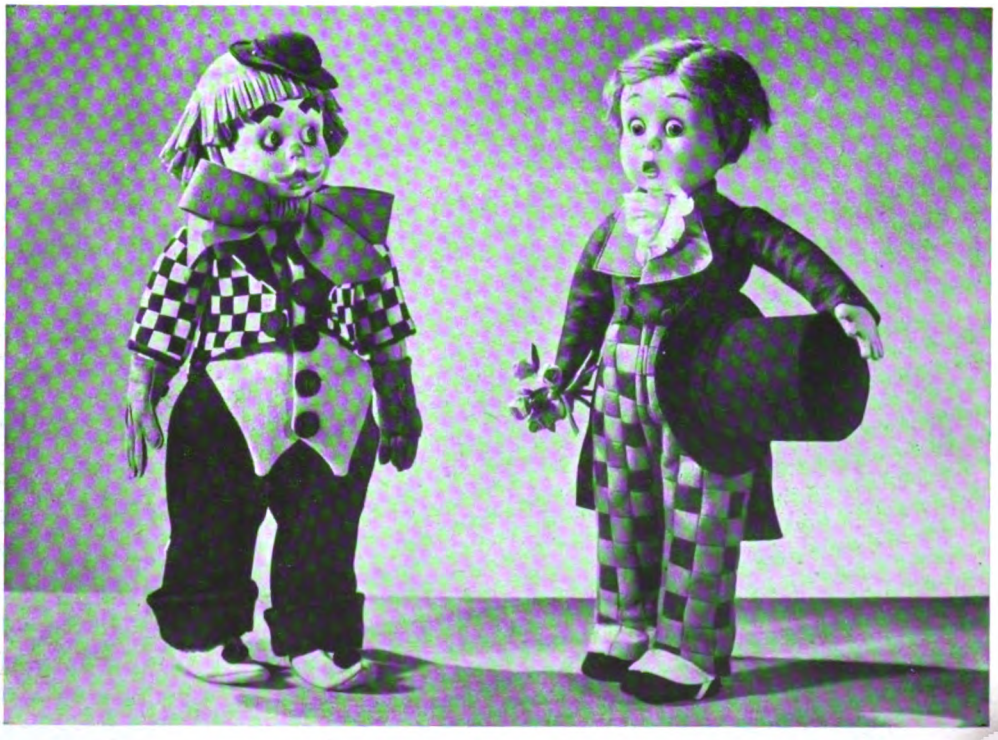


"Commedia dell'Arte" toys, polychrome felt, Navarra.

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"Cristina" dolls and furniture, De Lord Carosio.



Clown and suitor, polychrome felt dolls, Lenc

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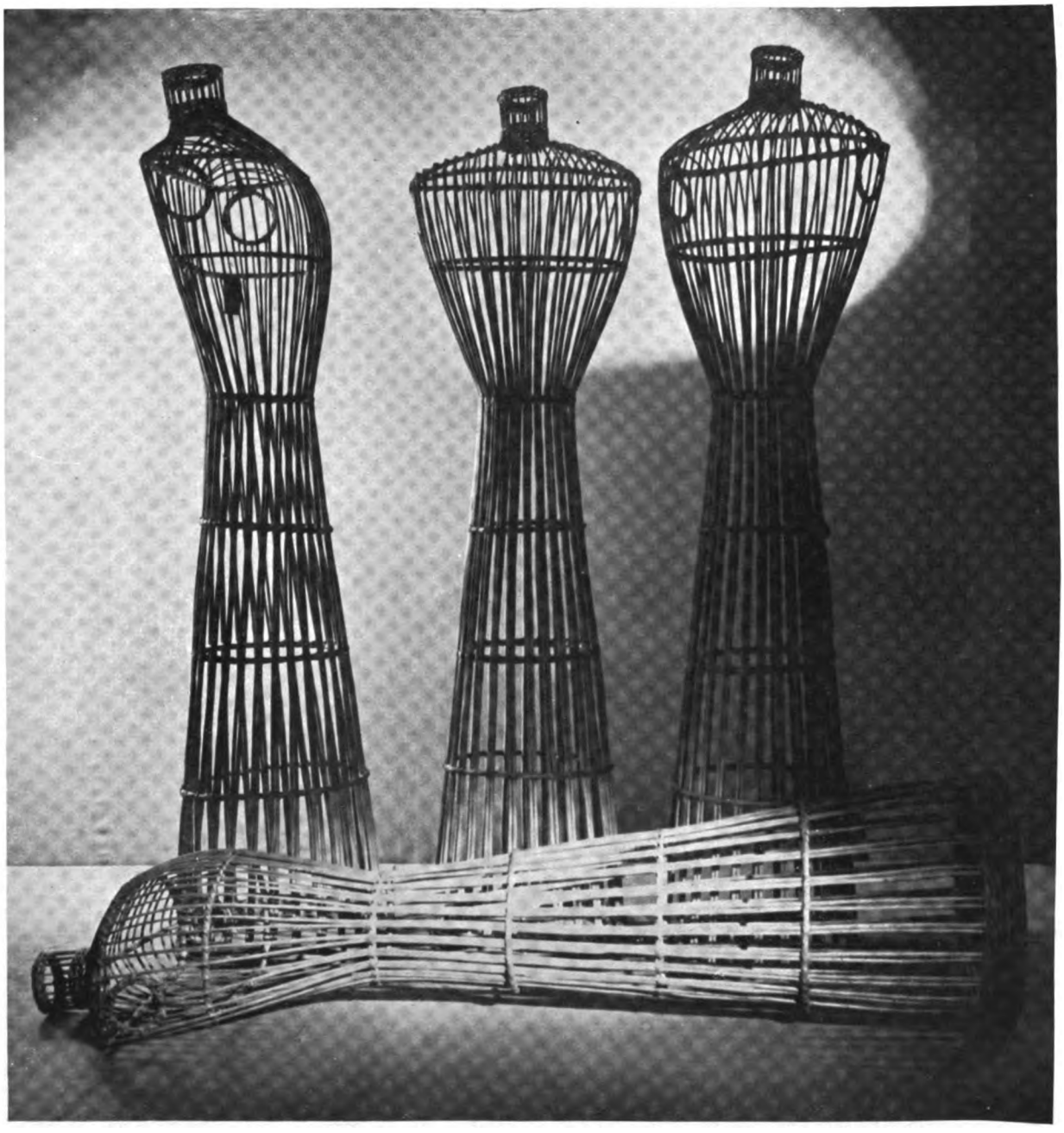


"St. Michael and the Dragon", shadow box picture, various materials, Signorelli Volpicelli.



Puppets, various materials, Signorelli Volpicelli.

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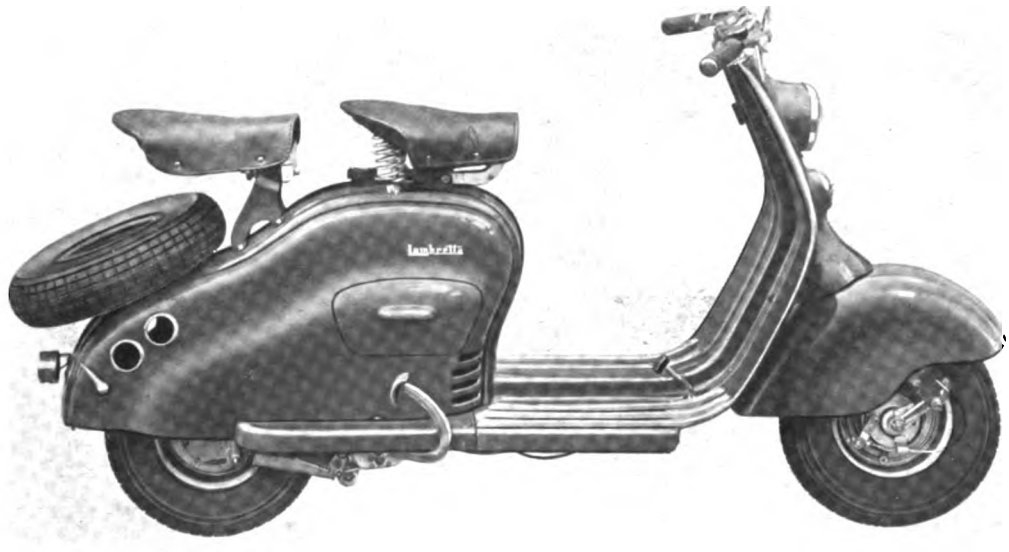


Drapery or costume stands, reed, Myricae.

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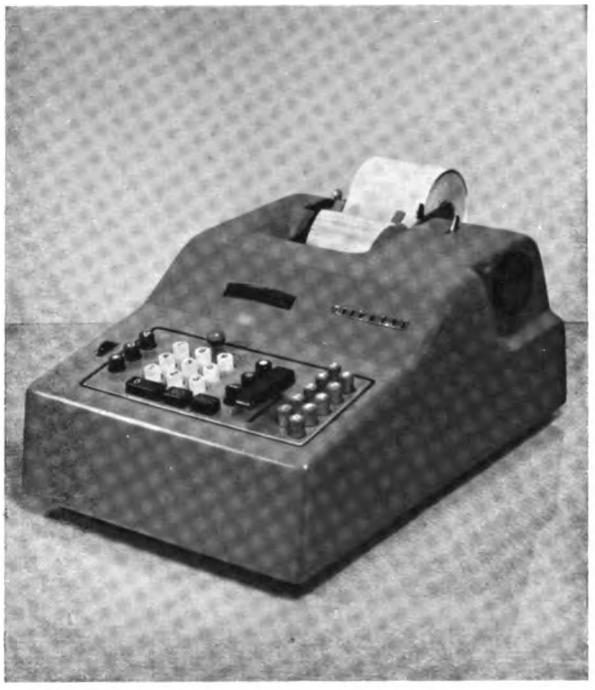


Espresso home coffee machine, Robbiati.



"Lambretta" motor scooter, Innocenti.

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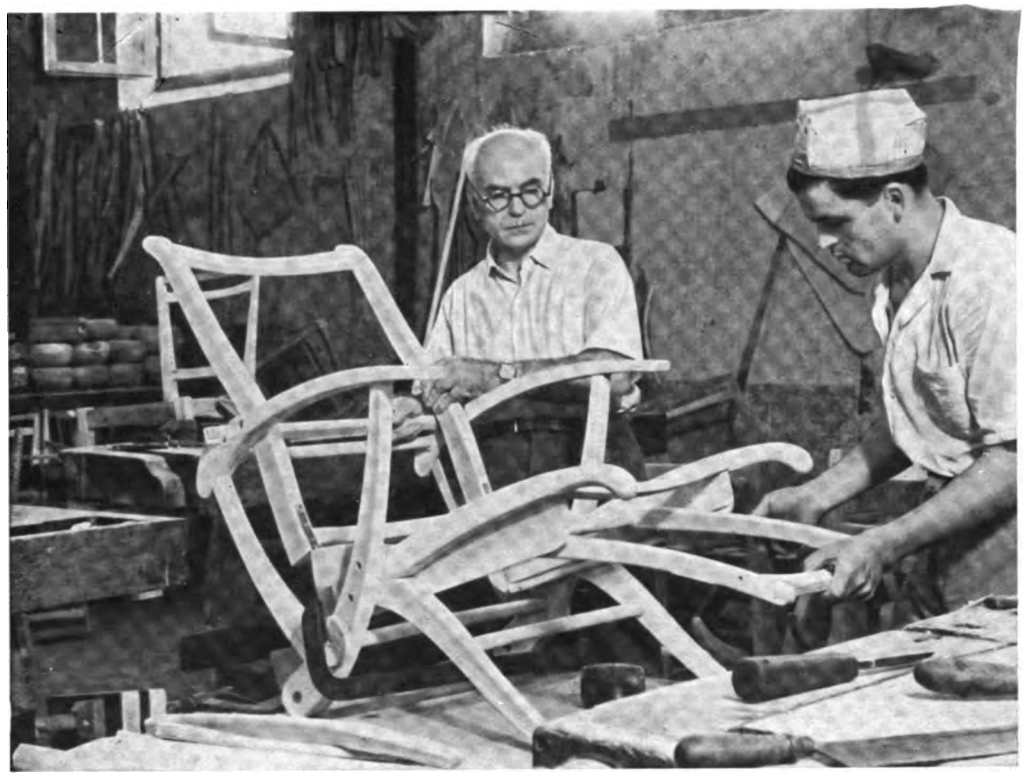


Electric calculator, Olivetti.



Portable typewriter, Olivetti.

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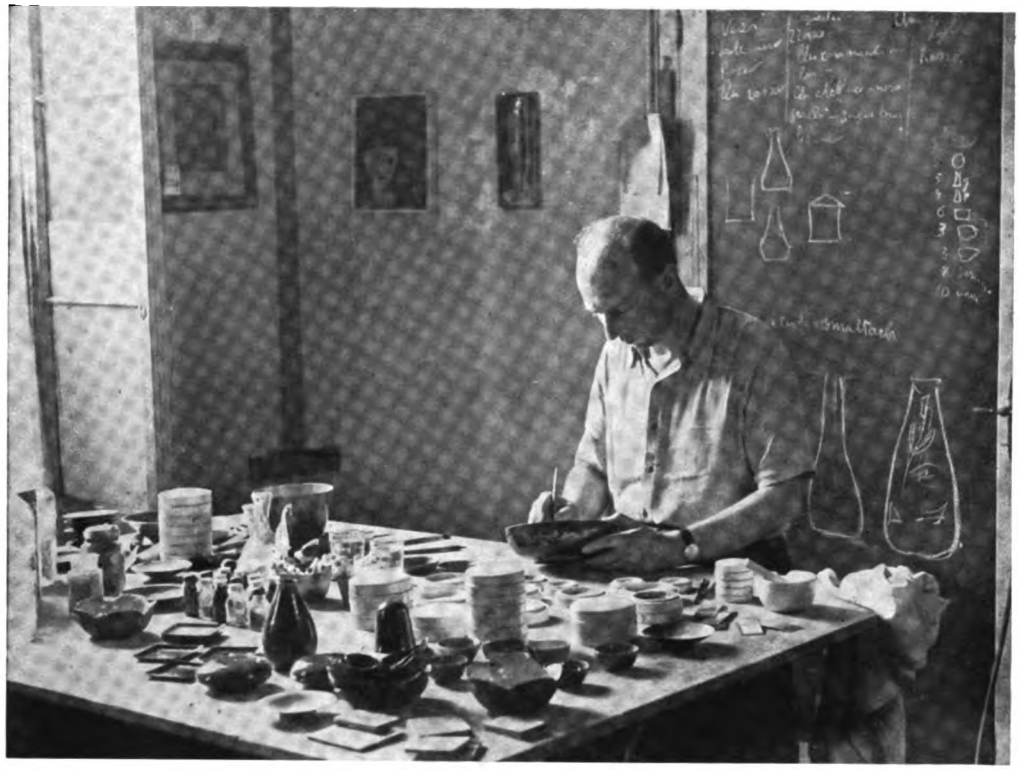


Guglielmo Pecorini (left) assembling a chair frame.

Victor Cerrato adds the color after the initial firing.

Alessandro Staccione modeling his ring-holders.

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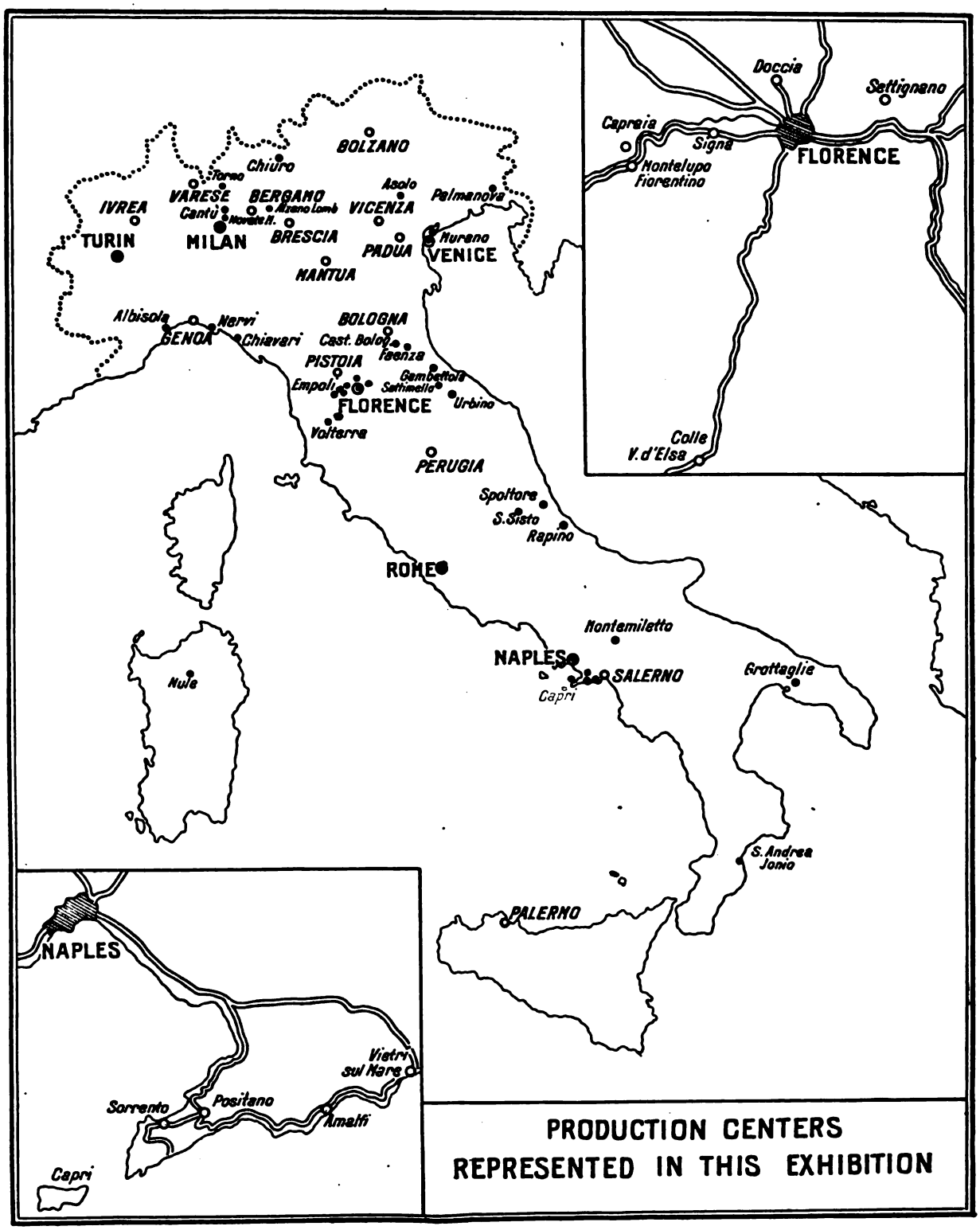
Paolo De Poli drawing the design on the copper bowl before it receives the enamels.



The glass is cut with a pair of shears while hot; at the Venini factory.

Irene Kowaliska rolling the color onto the printing block.

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